PREACHING MADE EASY

REV. THOMAS FLYNN

PREACHING MADE EASY

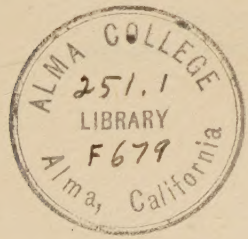
PREACHING MADE EASY

BY REV. THOMAS FLYNN

Author of "The Master's Word," etc.

"Except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? . . . In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

1 Cor. xiv, 9, 19.



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

1923

15971

NIHIL OBSTAT:

C. SCHUT, S.T.D.,
Censor Deputatus

IMPRIMATUR:

EDM. CAN. SURMONT,
Vicarius Generalis.

WESTMONASTERII,
Die 16° *Iulii*, 1923.

MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

OPERARIIS

IN

VINEA

PREFACE

MANY priests regard constant preaching as a difficult and disagreeable task.

The object of the following pages is to help to remove this false impression, and thus to encourage all to discharge this, the most important duty of the pastor, with pleasure and with profit to all concerned.

In Part I we deal with the general principles of plain preaching; in Part II with some easy practical forms and methods; and in Part III with the science and art of effective delivery.

CONTENTS

PART I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	ALLEGED DIFFICULTIES OF PREACHING	3
II.	THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF PREACHING	9
III.	THE OBLIGATION OF VALID PREACHING	15
IV.	THE PREACHING OF ST PAUL	22
V.	SACRED AND PROFANE ELOQUENCE	28
VI.	FALSE STANDARDS OF ELOQUENCE	34
VII.	FALSE MODELS OF ELOQUENCE	39
VIII.	FALSE MODELS OF PREACHING	44
IX.	THE SPOKEN WORD	52
X.	LITERARY STYLE	59

PART II

EASY PRACTICAL METHODS OF PREACHING

XI.	PREREQUISITES	69
XII.	A POPULAR INSTRUCTION	75
XIII.	A HOMILY	80
XIV.	THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS	85
XV.	HOLY SCRIPTURE IN GENERAL	90
XVI.	SERMONS ON OUR BLESSED LADY	99
XVII.	CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTIONS	105
XVIII.	CONSECUTIVE COURSES OF PREACHING	113
XIX.	OCCASIONAL SERMONS	121
XX.	SOURCES OF EFFICACY	126

PART III

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF DELIVERY

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXI.	THE ART OF DELIVERY	139
XXII.	VOICE AND BREATHING	143
XXIII.	VOICE PRODUCTION	148
XXIV.	PRONUNCIATION	151
XXV.	THE PRINCIPLES OF MODULATION	155
XXVI.	RATE OF DELIVERY	160
XXVII.	FORCE, EMPHASIS, AND EXPRESSION	166
XXVIII.	INFLECTION	172
XXIX.	PITCH	177
XXX.	GESTURE	183
	CONCLUSION	190
	APPENDIX A	195
	APPENDIX B	197
	APPENDIX C	199
	INDEX	201

PART I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF PREACHING

"And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power; that your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."—1 Cor. ii, 3-5.

PREACHING MADE EASY

CHAPTER I

ALLEGED DIFFICULTIES OF PREACHING

WE are all familiar with the famous advice of St Paul to Timothy : " I charge thee, before God and Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead, by his coming, and his kingdom : preach the word : be instant in season, out of season " (2 Tim. iv, 1, 2). To many priests, especially young priests, this seems a hard saying, because many are under the impression that it is a work of much labour and considerable skill to prepare and to preach even an ordinary sermon. They have been taught both by precept and tradition that it is tempting Providence to enter the pulpit without having a regular discourse already written out and committed to memory.

Some preceptors, in their anxiety to secure the proper discharge of the duty of preaching the gospel, would seem to imagine that all young priests are inordinately anxious to rush into the pulpit without due preparation, and that their natural impulsiveness in this direction should accordingly be duly restrained. The result is that some of their pupils are afraid to enter it at all. Far from being anxious to preach as often as they may, they try to escape as often as they can from what has thus been made for them a trying and painful ordeal.

Some popular preachers are free from the ordinary

obligations of a pastor. The ordinary missionary or diocesan priest, even though only a curate or assistant, has to preach at least once a week, and some must preach even oftener, all the year round; while the average popular preacher may not be bound to preach at all. On the comparatively rare occasions when such a one does preach, it is generally by the special invitation of some neighbouring pastor who requires a special preacher for some special occasion, such as the opening of a church or a convent, a charitable appeal, or some great anniversary. Perhaps the bishop invites him to preach in the cathedral. In any case he is given six or eight weeks' notice, and he spends much time in careful research and elaborate preparation, knowing that great things are expected of him and that his reputation is at stake. He duly delivers his oration, receives the usual congratulations, and returns with joy and triumph, ready to lay down the law upon how to preach, how to prepare, and what to say, as if all sermons were to be built on a similar plan and delivered in similar circumstances to those of his own discourse.

But what would such a one do if he had to preach fifty or a hundred sermons every year to the same congregation? He most certainly could not devote as much time and trouble to his weekly discourses as he did to his special sermon. It must be acknowledged, then, that general directions to ordinary preachers cannot be altogether founded on such limited experience. There must be some more practical way out of the difficulty which presents itself to most missionary priests, especially to those who must preach in the same parish for years, whether pastors or not. What is the use of telling a priest who has to preach so

frequently to the same congregation that he must devote a week, or a month, to the preparation of a sermon? Fifty-two into twelve won't go, according to the rules of arithmetic. The independent single gentleman may afford to entertain his friends now and then to a splendid banquet; but the father of a family cannot dream of exercising such elaborate hospitality every day even to the members of his own household. In the same way one may pay an extravagant price for some single article of special value or significance to him personally; but a regular trader in similar articles could not possibly dream of buying them at such a price in order to sell them at a profit to ordinary customers. And hence a just estimate of their real worth is more likely to be had from the general merchant than from the fancy buyer of odd lots.

We have heard of a celebrated preacher who, on being asked how long he took to prepare a sermon, answered that he would require a month to prepare a good one, a week for an indifferent one, and an hour or two for a poor one. Might we conclude, therefore, that, if he were the pastor of a parish where he had to preach twice a week, he would preach only once a month, or, if he discharged his duty as best he could, none of his sermons would be any good? Another famous preacher is credited with the opinion that it requires a month to prepare a sermon of twenty minutes, a week for one of half-an-hour, and no time at all for anything over. Would he, therefore, if he had to preach at Mass and at Vespers every Sunday, speak on each occasion for twenty minutes, or half an hour, or would he never stop at all?

We have seen some systems and methods of

preparation so troublesome and elaborate that they are impossible of employment in the actual practice of the average missionary priest or ordinary pastor, and are well calculated to render a young priest pulpit-shy for the rest of his life if he should imagine that such elaborate preparation as they suggest is necessary for all kinds of sermons and for all occasions. Thus many fear to face an ordeal which has been actually created for them and seek a plausible excuse as often as possible for omitting their sermon altogether.

We must remember that, like the man who declared that he "had been speaking prose all his life and did not know it," even the most untrained and uncultured usually speak in ordinary business matters after a certain natural order and logical method. If, for example, a man wants to borrow money to tide him over a time of crisis, he does not blindly rush off to the nearest money-lender and bluntly ask for the sum required. He first considers the matter carefully, and then introduces the subject in a general way, explaining his financial status, his security, and his hope of success. And he never finds it necessary to write out his statement and learn it by rote. He has all the essentials of a logical and orderly discourse, though he does not know them by name, or use them *ex professo*, his zeal for his own interests being his best natural guide for setting out his case in the most favourable aspect. And this seems to be something of the same kind of preparation which St Francis de Sales insinuates when he says: "*Pro præparatione ad prædicandum, probo ut vespera pridiana fiat, mane vero nobiscum meditemur quod aliis dicturi sumus.*"

"Half a loaf is better than no bread," and is it not, therefore, far better that a priest should say something, that he should "speak the word" however imperfectly, than that he should remain altogether silent when it is his duty to speak? "His watchmen are all blind, they are all ignorant; dumb dogs not able to bark" (Is. lvi, 10), says Isaias, speaking of such, for the preacher has been appointed a watchman to the people. "I have made thee a watchman to the house of Israel: and thou shalt hear the word out of my mouth, and shalt tell it them from me" (Ezech. iii, 17), says the Lord, who accordingly warns him: "If, when I say to the wicked, Thou shalt surely die: thou declare it not to him, nor speak to him, that he may be converted from his wicked way, and live; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but I will require his blood at thy hand" (*Ibid.* 18). "All her people sigh, they seek bread . . . the little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them" (Lam. i, 11; iv, 4), complains the prophet Jeremias.

Let all take courage, therefore, and feel convinced that every priest, no matter how comparatively inferior his intellectual attainments may be, or how much his early training may have been neglected, can quite easily say something to the purpose whenever his duty bids him. Once started with this conviction he can study to improve his methods by the aid of theoretical principles. But as "*Faber fabricando fit,*" so "*Prædicator prædicando fit.*" One may make a short journey in a leaky boat with perfect confidence if one knows one can swim. But one who cannot swim is afraid to take the risk at all. Hence if a priest knows he can say something, even

without any elaborate proximate preparation, he is far more likely to do his duty well than one who is at times afraid to say anything lest he may not say what is best. "*Teneturne Parochus,*" asks Berardi, "*ad concionem formalem atque ad amussim juxta eloquentiæ regulas elaboratam et declamatam?*" And he answers "*Negative: sed sufficit sermo paternus et familiaris. Bened. XIV (Notif. X, no 3). Imo ordinarie oportet ut Parochus, sermonis unitatem atque idiomatis puritatem minus respiciendo, eo modo procedat quo filiis suis magis utilis esse possit.*"

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE AND OBJECT OF PREACHING

IT would seem, then, that in speaking of preaching in general the attention of many is mostly concentrated on that most intricate in form but least profitable in result of all kinds of sacred eloquence—the "set sermon," with its wonderful and varied anatomy, choice metaphors, apt illustrations, graces of style and fine language. The result is that many priests are under the impression that the advice and directions usually given for the construction of this particular form of discourse apply equally to all other forms of preaching, and to all other circumstances. Such a production needs to be read and re-read in order to be fully appreciated. And if it does not as a rule lay claim to all the aids of worldly eloquence, "loftiness of speech and of wisdom," it is hard to know what St Paul complains of in such a method of preaching the gospel. The apostle devotes a considerable portion of his First Epistle to the Corinthians to the necessity and advantages of plain and simple preaching; and he makes it clear, too, that he refers to the literary style or manner of setting forth the truths of the gospel rather than to the nature of the arguments or the mode of exposition employed. This is evident from the whole tenor of the Epistle as well as from the circumstances which called it forth.

The city of Corinth was very wealthy, and its citizens were highly cultured, polished and elegant in

their manners and literary taste. St Paul preached there for a year and a half and established a very flourishing church. After his departure a converted Alexandrine Jew, named Apollo, came to continue the good work. Apollo was very well versed in the Hebrew scriptures and was a charming and powerful orator as well, so that he found many ardent admirers of his style of preaching amongst the aristocratic Corinthians, who at length came to consider him as completely superior to St Paul on that account alone. This led to discussions and disputes amongst the members of the church, and at length to an open schism between the parties, one side declaring for Paul and the other for Apollo, as if each had preached a different gospel, thus confounding the substance of their preaching with its mere form or manner.

As soon as St Paul heard of this sad state of affairs he wrote his famous First Epistle to the Corinthians, begging of them to be of one mind and judgement with regard to the real end and object of preaching. He showed them their foolishness in imagining that the value of the holy word of God consisted in anything but its own inherent power for good. Moreover, he proved that his own plain and simple style of preaching—"not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power" (1 Cor. ii, 4)—was more in accordance with the express wish of Almighty God himself, by calling their attention to the fact that among all those who had been divinely appointed to preach the gospel from the very beginning, there were "not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble: but the foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that he may confound the strong. And the

base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible, hath God chosen, and things that are not, that he might bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his sight" (1 Cor. i, 26-29).

According to St Paul, therefore, the Corinthians made the mistake of judging, and of judging by an entirely false standard, the respective merits of Apollo and himself as ministers of the gospel, by applying to the holy word of God the canons of mere literary criticism, and praising or condemning their preaching as if it were but a secular exercise of the art of eloquence concerning subjects of mere carnal or worldly importance, and as to the acceptance or rejection of which they were free to choose. "Whereas there is among you envying and contention, are you not carnal, and walk according to man?" (1 Cor. iii, 3) he asks; and corrects such false ideas by stating that both he and Apollo spoke to them not as mere men but as the ministers of God, each with his own proper gift of eloquence such as it might be—"to every one as the Lord hath given"—each announcing the same great message with the same great authority, as ambassadors of the same Great King in the same great cause—"I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Therefore, neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth: but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth, and he that watereth, are one" (1 Cor. iii, 5-8).

Hence we have really no more right to criticize with a view to our future action the mere mechanical form of the message which is announced to us from the pulpit than we should have to deal in a similar

manner, for instance, with the style in which an ambassador conveys to us an authoritative message from the sovereign, or with the mere handwriting of the amanuensis who may have transcribed it for our perusal. "For Christ, therefore, we are ambassadors, God, as it were, exhorting by us" (2 Cor. v, 20).

The preaching of the gospel, then, was to be conducted on principles altogether different from those of ordinary secular instruction or appeal. It was to be a new kind of oratory. Mere human eloquence might plead causes which depended for their success on the nature or arrangement of the arguments employed, whether true or false, the personal influence which the orator exercised by appealing to literary taste, personal prejudice, natural instincts and the human passions, as well as by the charm of his own individuality, choice language, rounded periods and elegant delivery. But the truths of the gospel were to depend for their acceptance upon the plain and incontestable proofs afforded by the life, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ that they had indeed God himself for their author; for their good effect upon their own consequent inherent power; and for the spiritual fruits of such personal conviction and conversion in each individual soul upon the informing grace of the Holy Spirit—"for it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, according to his good will" (Phil. ii, 13). The cause was not to be that of Paul or of Apollo, or of anyone but Christ, "and him crucified."—"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not in loftiness of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of Christ. For I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And

I was with you in much weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the Spirit and power; that your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (1 Cor. ii, 1-5).

Notwithstanding all this, however, we still find people even at the present day anxious to find an Apollo amongst the preachers. They look for language, style, and all the graces of oratory as well as of personal appearance in the pulpit; and even priests themselves are often inclined to expect a literary treat, if not some gospel novelty, in every book of sermons they peruse. The people seek for pleasure and entertainment in the sermons of the popular preacher, who not infrequently caters for their requirements by preparing his discourses as if he were to address the ancient Athenians on art or poetry. And the result is considered to be most satisfactory if some of the "nice people" in the congregation refer to the sermon as "lovely," "quite enjoyable," or "most entertaining." "The apostle," says St Francis de Sales, "detests those hearers who have *itching ears*, and therefore all those preachers who endeavour to please them. Which is, to say the least, absurd and slavish. At the end of a sermon I should like to hear, not: What a fine preacher! What a memory he must have! How well he speaks! But rather: Oh, how beautiful is penance! How necessary! O God, how good thou art! How just thou art! and the like." "Father," said Louis XIV to Massillon, after the great preacher had occupied the pulpit in the royal presence at Versailles, "I have heard many great orators in this chapel. I have been highly

pleased with them. But whenever I hear you preach, I depart displeased with myself, for I see more of my own character." If a sermon is to be praised at all, such is the highest and the best praise that could be bestowed upon it. "Man seeth those things that appear, but the Lord beholdeth the heart" (1 Kings xvi, 7); and the real value of a sermon is known to Almighty God alone, for he alone knows the actual results in the individual soul. For good results, however, no preacher deserves thanks, because, although Paul may have planted, and Apollo watered, it is God alone that "giveth the increase" (1 Cor. iii, 6). But it is consoling to know that "every man shall receive his own reward according to his labour" (*Ibid.* 8), rather than according to the fruits thereof; while it is well to remember that no one will escape punishment if he neglects the work entrusted to him. "If I preach the gospel," says St Paul, "it is no glory to me, for a necessity lieth upon me: for woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation is committed to me" (1 Cor. ix, 16, 17).

CHAPTER III

THE OBLIGATION OF VALID PREACHING

IT must not be supposed from what has been said that a priest requires no preparation for his sermons. He most certainly does, but not, as we shall afterwards see more clearly, that strenuous, urgently necessary *immediate* preparation which is often so harassing and laborious because it is so often rendered necessary by the absence of any previous remote preparation, by neglect of study or the regular reading and absorption of suitable matter, or by lack of interest in the subject until the obligation of a sermon *immediate urget*. So that we must carefully distinguish between one kind of preparation and another, just as we must distinguish between one form or species of preaching and another. Hence there is no use in trying to persuade a priest who has to preach frequently that such an elaborate system of *immediate* preparation is necessary as he cannot afford to put in practice "in season, out of season" constantly. Our object is to convince him that his duty is to preach every time the occasion demands it of him; that, even if he is not as well prepared as he might be for any particular occasion, he may not on that account neglect his duty altogether. If the average priest preaches as often as he is bound to preach he cannot possibly find time for such elaborate immediate preparation as has been mentioned. Why, then, endeavour to convince him of the necessity of performing the impossible? Why insist upon placing

in his hands on all occasions an instrument which he cannot always and consistently use, which hampers him in the discharge of his most important duty by actually casting difficulties in his way and thus frequently offering him a plausible excuse for neglecting it altogether?

According to St Paul, the chief obligation of a pastor, and especially of a bishop, is to preach. "Christ sent me," he declares, "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Cor. i, 17). By which he means that although a pastor has two principal duties to discharge, namely, the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, the former is by far the more important for him. This appears also from the words of our Divine Master himself to his apostles: "Going therefore, teach ye all nations, baptizing them" (Matt. xxviii, 19). It does not follow, however, that St Paul was not ordained to baptize also, or that the administration of the sacraments is specifically inferior to preaching, for he says of himself: "I have no way come short of them that are above measure apostles" (2 Cor. xii, 11); but whereas, although he himself did sometimes baptize—". . . . I baptized also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not whether I baptized any other. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (2 Cor. i, 16, 17)—he generally left the discharge of that duty to others who had more time and opportunity, so that he might devote himself entirely to the work of preaching. Thus, after he had more fully instructed those Ephesians who had not yet heard of the Holy Ghost, and who knew only the baptism of John, he handed them over to others to be baptized. But he himself confirmed

them afterwards, because those who had baptized them were not bishops (Acts xix). Our divine Master himself never baptized anyone—"Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples" (John iv, 2), according to St John. By which Christ meant to show that those whose duty it was to preach the gospel should devote themselves chiefly to preaching and leave the administration of the sacraments to others who had more time for it. Hence, although, for instance, a bishop or a priest can exercise all the minor orders, it by no means follows that either should, for example, act as porter or acolyte, while there are inferior clergy ready to discharge their proper functions. "It is far better," says Estius, "to save one soul from the power of the devil by preaching the word of God than to deliver the bodies of many from his molestation" (*In Epistolas, ad Cor.*, I, i, 17).

From all which, as well as from the positive legislation of the Church on this matter, it is clear that the duty of preaching the gospel is not only paramount—"*officium principalissimum pastoris,*" according to St Thomas— but that it is not duly discharged by the delivery of desultory discourses. And although a pastor has usually a multitude of other duties to discharge, he is not thereby excused from the obligation of regular and constant preaching. Moreover, just as a sacrament may be invalidly administered so as to be only *fictio sacramenti,* through some essential defect, so a priest may engage in the delivery of discourses from the pulpit which cannot be regarded as valid preaching. Thus, for instance, announcements of meetings, church collections, reading of lists, airing of grievances, and so forth, may occasion

considerable *talking* from the pulpit; but this is not valid *preaching*, nor indeed preaching in any sense, although it is sometimes apparently made to do duty for such. Hence St Paul insists: "A necessity lieth upon me: for woe is me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. ix, 16). But it is even worse to imitate the fancy novelties of some heretical preachers in order to endeavour to escape the charge of want of originality which seems to be the pet complaint of many critics who do not realize the nature of the gospel message. Personal reminiscences may sometimes, if brief, be useful as illustrative, but we must never forget that what happened to us here or there is not at all so important as what happened when Jesus walked in Galilee and Judea. Hence, "not adulterating the word of God," we should "preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ our Lord" (2 Cor. iv, 2, 5).

The excuse of not being prepared because we have not an elaborate discourse committed to memory is one that would frequently relieve the average priest of the obligation of preaching if it could always be admitted as valid. The priest who would refuse to preach because he feared to lose a reputation already acquired by the delivery of set sermons would be like the servant in the parable who hid his talent in the earth because he was unwilling to trade with it, "knowing that his master was a hard man" (Matt. xxv). Preparation is indeed necessary. But we must not confound *remote* with *immediate* preparation; nor one kind of the latter with another; nor must we misinterpret authorities on the matter; as when, for instance, Butler says of St Augustine: "Knowing that the instruction of the flock was the principal duty of the pastoral charge, he never inter-

rupted the course of his sermons till his death. We have near four hundred extant, though several were not wrote by him, but copied by others, as he delivered them. They are not regular orations, composed of all their parts; but familiar discourses, spoken without much preparation." Here the preparation evidently meant is *immediate* preparation.

Every priest has such a knowledge of his theology as is at least sufficient in the beginning for ordinary plain sermons; which can be rendered expedite and practical without much immediate preparation; but which ought to be preserved, increased and strengthened by regular reading with some particular object in view. Thus he will in a sense be "*semper paratus*" and he will be able at very short notice to deliver a sermon when required without any apparent preparation—and a *valid* sermon, too.

But surely, then, the sermons of such a preacher would not be remarkable for their eloquence? No, indeed, if we mean by eloquence the delivery of polished orations, "composed of all their parts" in the regular oratorical way. And this is exactly as it should be, for there is not only no necessity for elaborate and polished orations in the pulpit but such would even be out of place there, and contrary to the spirit of the gospel, which depends for its efficacy on its own inherent power and not on mere human eloquence at all. "In vain," says Butler, "doth the minister of God confide in the weak resources of mere human eloquence and pomp of words, by which he rather debases the dignity and majesty of the sacred oracles: whilst he pleases the ear and gains the applause of his audience, he leaves their hearts dry" (*Life of St Bernardine of Siena*). Hence St

Paul acknowledges with honest and pleasant conviction that his sermons were poor examples of oratory, and apparently but little appreciated by the worldly-wise.

And herein we may discover why it is that so many priests dislike preaching, especially in the beginning of their career. It is because they have been led to regard it as the formal delivery of set discourses, arranged according to all the rules and delivered with all the graces of secular orations. In other words because the value of set sermons as one form of preaching has been unconsciously exaggerated, and then applied to almost all other forms, until it would seem that the principles laid down by our divine Master in general by his example, and by St Paul in particular by his positive assertions, were out of date in the present generation. According to the holy gospel itself, the word of God "is like to a grain of mustard-seed . . . which is the least indeed of all seeds" (Matt. xiii, 31, 32); that is, the least presentable from a purely literary or oratorical point of view.

It by no means follows, however, that the gospel may be preached validly in any old way, and that any kind of preparation, or no preparation at all, whether remote or proximate, is good enough. "St Basil and his friend St Gregory," says Butler, "among the things which they forsook in renouncing the world, often enumerate eloquence, but mean the gaudy trimmings and empty delicacies of that art, which only please the ear; or they speak of the profane use of eloquence, to renounce which, especially in that age, was certainly a great sacrifice. For both by their example and works they condemn those

Christian preachers who, pretending to imitate the inspired apostles, cover their laziness and ignorance with a contemptuous disdain of the art of eloquence" (*Life of St Basil*).

Whilst, therefore, the preacher should be filled with a proper sense of the dignity and power of the holy word of God, he should never regard it as depending for its value on the graces of worldly eloquence, or the personal charms of an accomplished speaker who has drawn on all the resources of his literary and oratorical ability in order to enhance its power to please. St Augustine and many other great preachers were well versed in all the arts and graces which go to make the accomplished orator, but their sermons were always plain and familiar, yet with a suitable dignity. And this is what Almighty God has so ordered—"which God ordained before the world" (1 Cor. ii, 7), "that no flesh should glory in his sight" (*Ibid.* i, 29); lest any man might take credit to himself and thus deprive the holy Word of its chief power and merit. Hence St Paul declares: "Christ sent me . . . to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of speech, lest the cross of Christ should be made void" (1 Cor. i, 17). And again: "My speech and my preaching were not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in showing of the spirit and power; that your faith might not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God" (*Ibid.* ii, 4, 5). And he concludes: "But we have the mind of Christ" (*Ibid.* ii, 16).

CHAPTER IV

THE PREACHING OF ST PAUL

THE question is sometimes asked whether St Paul could have preached, if he wished, "in loftiness of speech" and in "the learned and persuasive words of human wisdom." According to some he could, and according to others he could not. But whether he could or not, it is quite certain that he would not even if he could, for the great apostle utterly despised all show of human learning and worldly wisdom, and all the tricks and charms of profane eloquence, professing not to know anything but "Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Cor. ii, 2), and deliberately adopting a style of preaching which could no more recommend itself to the polished orators of the time than his own disfigured body could please the admirers of physical beauty and the material charms of a distinguished personal appearance.

According to John of Antioch, "Paul was round-shouldered." According to Nicephorus, "Paul was short and dwarfish in stature, crooked in person, and slightly bent." He knew Hebrew well, but his native language was Aramaic. He was thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew Scriptures, in which he had been instructed by the famous Jewish teacher, Gamaliel, who was "a doctor of the law, respected by all the people" (Acts v, 34). "I am a Jew," said St Paul, speaking in Hebrew to the Jews in Jerusalem, "born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the truth of

the law of the fathers" (*Ibid.* xxii, 3). He was not a classical scholar in the strict sense of the word, but he wrote and spoke Greek, though his language and style were provincial, and must have appeared barbarous to the polished Grecians to whom he preached and wrote epistles. According to himself, his "bodily presence was weak, and his speech contemptible" (2 Cor. x, 10); and he openly acknowledges his want of skill in forming the Greek letters—"see what a letter I have written to you with my own hand" (Gal. vi, 11), for, though he usually dictated his epistles to an amanuensis, he always added some few lines at the conclusion in his own handwriting as a kind of seal or proof of their authenticity.

As far as the Pauline Epistles are concerned it has been said that their very want of style is their style and chief literary merit. Nevertheless they show most clearly that Saint Paul could have written with ease, elegance and artistic finish if he had so desired, for he frequently interrupts some unconscious burst of rhythmic eloquence by the evidently deliberate method in which he departs from mere elegance of language in order to express his meaning more clearly, or to amplify a statement, though at the expense of what might be called the beauty of the passage. "Doubtless," says Fouard, "when the letter was finished, the apostle read it over, but without a thought for the faults of style, and the sentences which were too involved or too curt and unfinished. Far from being troubled by the incessant repetitions, he was rather delighted to find the same word recurring to enforce and inculcate his master thought; when he re-read them, as when he wrote them, he was too absorbed in his subject-matter to think of the form it was cast

in. It would appear that a few notes dotted on the margin were the only corrections that ever occurred to him; and these perhaps are the sentences which, when they came to be inserted afterwards in the text, read now like parentheses, overloading and even quite obscuring certain passages."

Not only did the apostle despise the graces of oratory, the charms of style, and the canons of elegant eloquence, but he had even still greater contempt for the vanities of human learning, the poverty of intellect of the philosophers, and the foolishness of the so-called wisdom of the world in general. His language was not the cultured speech of the superior classes of the time; his rhetoric was not the rhetoric of the schools; and his logic was not the logic of the philosophers, who "became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was darkened. For professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. i, 21, 22). "Let no man deceive himself," he says, "if any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written: I will catch the wise in their own craftiness. And again: The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Let no man therefore glory in men" (1 Cor. iii, 18-21).

Thus St Paul, the most renowned as well as the most successful preacher, after our divine Master himself, that the world ever produced, or is ever likely to produce, despised all those masters, models and methods, all those principles and embellishments of profane orators which are sometimes regarded even now as the very acme of perfection to which preachers should aspire. In this the great apostle followed the

example of his divine Master, and was not ashamed of the caustic criticism of the accomplished masters of eloquence. "I am appointed a preacher and an apostle, and teacher of the Gentiles. For which cause also I suffer these things: but I am not ashamed. For I know what I have believed, and I am certain that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him, against that day. Hold the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me in faith, and in the love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. i, 11-13).

The first apostles were mostly rude and ignorant poor fishermen of Galilee, whose speech was strongly flavoured with the rough provincial accent so distasteful to the polished citizens of Jerusalem; and they must have preached in what appeared a barbarous and uncouth style. Yet at his first sermon St Peter converted "about three thousand souls" (Acts ii, 41).

In spite of all this, however, young priests are sometimes told what will be expected from them when they have to preach to "enlightened," "educated," and "aristocratic" congregations in big city churches, and even to learned members of scholastic bodies. But where are the so-called learned and enlightened congregations, even within the walls of a university, whose supposed knowledge or culture places them beyond the reach of plain and simple preaching? Must "the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi, 5) in one way, and must the holy Word of God be dressed for others in flowers of language, graces of oratory, charms of style, and novelty of invention, so that they may regard it as a compliment to their superiority of intellect and training, and admire it as if it were an academic display submitted for their pleasure and approval, to be judged according to the

standard of profane eloquence and the carnal spirit of worldly wisdom? Indeed a simple instruction on one of the great truths, mortal sin, the Paschal Precept, or the manner of making a good Confession would do more good to the proud of intellect than any amount of high-flown swollen sentiment or ingenious fancies, which so often please the ear without moving the heart. All this indeed is expressed by St Paul when he says: "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? . . . Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. For both the Jews require signs, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews indeed a stumbling block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness. But unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i, 20-24).

Then the apostle proceeds to explain in detail how the Word of God should be regarded from a spiritual and supernatural rather than from a material and natural, or worldly, standpoint, such as that from which we regard or judge mere human eloquence or reasoning; the latter depending for its worth on human learning and skill, the former on its own intrinsic power as God's message to us; the latter appealing to our natural, material intellect, the former to our supernatural, spiritual judgement—"Howbeit we speak wisdom among the perfect; yet not the wisdom of this world, neither of the princes of this world that come to nought; but we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, a wisdom which is hidden. . . . But to

us God hath revealed them by his spirit. For the spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, but the spirit of a man that is in him? So the things also that are of God no man knoweth, but the spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of this world, but the spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are given us from God. Which things also we speak, not in the learned words of human wisdom; but in the doctrine of the spirit, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the sensual man perceiveth not those things that are of the spirit of God: for it is foolishness to him, and he cannot understand it, because *it is spiritually examined*. But the spiritual man judgeth all things; and he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii, 6-16).

Hence the great apostle preached to the learned and the enlightened, to the proud philosophers and to the cultured masters of eloquence as if they were but children, as indeed they were with regard to things spiritual—"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. As unto little ones in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able as yet. But neither indeed are you now able; for you are yet carnal" (*Ibid.* iii, 12). No wonder, then, one of the four great things St Augustine longed for was "to behold Paul preaching"!

CHAPTER V

SACRED AND PROFANE ELOQUENCE

THE main object of all eloquence is either to convince or to convert, for if our speech be designed merely to please or to entertain it scarcely deserves the name of eloquence.

We may, of course, by the use of specious phrases and sophisms convince a man of falsehood as well as of truth. And we may by the same means convert him to evil as well as to good. Indeed the decline and corruption of profane eloquence may be traced to this fact, for men who had felt convinced or converted with regard to certain views or modes of action respectively soon began to discover that they could be quite as easily drawn to the very opposite conclusions by equally skilled speakers on the other side.

But this decline was gradual, though natural. It was through the rise of democracy in the Grecian republics that eloquence reached its height. At that time Greece had arrived at a very high state of culture and refinement; and even the general public were able to discriminate very accurately between the respective merits of public speakers and writers, and of the causes which they advocated or condemned. This gift of appreciation they had developed no doubt from the fact that as even the poorest amongst them could rise by merit to the highest offices in the State, they naturally possessed a lively personal interest in all public questions, and so were led by degrees to formulate and give expression to their own views. Hence it was to the interest of all to endeavour to

cultivate the art of eloquence, so that they might be able to show their capabilities for the offices to which they aspired.

This general desire on the part of the public to excel in eloquence caused to spring into existence a class of instructors in the art of public speaking and of eloquence generally, who devoted themselves to the acquirement of all the arts and tricks of language, of reasoning, and of appeal to the passions or feelings of the crowd. These rhetoricians, or sophists, as they were called (for of course it mattered not whether their arguments were sound, or their statements or conclusions true, as long as they influenced the multitude), at length developed a regular system of recipes for persuading a crowd to almost any view on any subject.

The Romans imitated the Greeks, although they never equalled them, and the same causes which led to the corruption of Grecian eloquence, led also by the same road to the corruption of Roman eloquence, for soon, as Cicero says of the style of Isocrates, the most famous of the Greek rhetoricians, public speaking "became more fitted for show than for argument; more suited to amuse a popular audience than for judicial contests." Of the same orator, who spent ten years in the polishing of a single discourse, Dionysius of Halicarnassus says: "His studied circumflexion of periods, and juvenile affectation of the flowers of speech, I do not approve. The thought is frequently made subservient to the music of the sentence, and elegance is preferred to reason; whereas in every discourse, where business and affairs are concerned, nature ought to be followed; and nature certainly dictates that the expression should be an object subordinate to the sense, not the sense to the expression.

When one rises to give counsel concerning war and peace, or takes the charge of a private man, who is standing at the bar to be tried for his life, those studied decorations, those theatrical graces and juvenile flowers are out of place. Instead of being of service, they are detrimental to the cause we espouse. When the question is of a serious nature, ornaments which at another time would have beauty, then lose their effect, and prove hostile to the affections which we wish to raise in our hearers" (*Judic. de Isoc.* xii). How much more forcibly do not these words apply to the eloquence of the pulpit! Surely here of all other places the speaker pleads a cause of infinite importance, and discusses business of eternal consequence! What a contrast, too, between the eloquence of Isocrates and that of St Paul, according to the judicious standard of criticism adopted by the acknowledged authority just quoted! And how well the style of the great apostle seems to have been justified even by the canons of profane eloquence!

The corruption of all true eloquence was completed by the artificial tricks and methods of the rhetoricians, and when Christianity appeared a new species of eloquence arose. Now the preachers of the Cross had something solid, substantial and certain to place before their hearers, for which they had the positive authority of divine truth itself, being not "the word of men, but [as it is indeed] the Word of God" (1 Thess. ii, 13). And the results were to be solid and lasting rather than momentary and fleeting. Hence the corruption of profane eloquence was a providential preparation for the preaching of the gospel and the success of sacred eloquence. The people in general had lost faith in mere talkers,

and although their ears might still have been pleased with the "sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal" of worldly wisdom, their minds could never be permanently convinced nor their hearts radically converted except by the plain and simple force of immutable gospel truths.

In the beginning of Christianity, however, preachers had to address pagans, idolaters and Jews. They had to uproot ancient prejudices and implant the seeds of the true faith in the most uncongenial soil. Hence there is even a marked difference between the sermons which St Paul himself addressed to pagan and to Jewish converts and to "those of the household of the faith" respectively. His first mission was to the Jews (Rom. i, 16), according to the arrangement desired by the Master himself—"that penance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke xxiv, 27). He confounded their teachers by their own methods, in their own style, and out of their own mouths, by appealing to the Hebrew scriptures, in which both he and they were so well versed, they, however, in the letter only, but Paul in the spirit as well; and he proved to them that Christ was the Promised Redeemer.

Quite different methods had to be adopted to convert the "Gentiles that knew not God" (1 Thess. iv, 5). But St Paul was equal to the task, and succeeded in opposing divine truth to their ignorance and error in such a way that he gave offence to no one, but rather prevailed on them by the very force and simplicity of his eloquence to consider such proofs as were suitable to their previous intellectual training and religious ignorance and prejudices.

The modern preacher finds himself as a general rule in far different circumstances from those with which the early preachers of Christianity were confronted. Now we speak as a rule to "those who are of the household of the faith" (Gal. vi, 10); who have been born and reared in the Catholic religion and who are accordingly eager to hear the word of God in plain and simple language from the lips of his anointed minister. There is, therefore, seldom any great necessity for the average preacher to take account of the presence of heathen philosophers in the congregation. There may indeed occasionally be an odd member or two even in the pastor's own flock who, however, will not be found worthy of any special notice, because as a rule such are merely suffering from some disappointment and are for the time not at peace with God. So that, at least in the beginning, the young priest may safely confine himself to plain instructions on some article of acknowledged Catholic belief, some simple explanation of objects of Catholic devotion or practice, and the generally accepted principles of the gospel.

Just as the eloquence of the Bar at the present day has been so modified by the necessity arising from modern conditions that now there is rarely if ever any need for oratorical appeals to the passions or to the prejudices of numerous judges but rather an accurate knowledge of statute and of precedent, so the urgent necessity for extraordinary efforts on the part of the ordinary priest no longer exists, although, as will be seen later, a simple course of Christian Apologetics will be as easy for the priest as it will be interesting and useful to the people, and will serve to defend the doctrines of holy church from the ravages

of modern infidelity, the vicious poison of which will unfortunately sometimes be found to have inoculated in some degree the callow intellects of the inexperienced or the ignorant, as well as to have been deliberately imbibed as a soporific by those whose souls are tossed about in the dark waters of iniquity.

CHAPTER VI

FALSE STANDARDS OF ELOQUENCE

NOTWITHSTANDING the corruption of eloquence by the professional rhetoricians, and the rise of a new form of eloquence in the preaching of the gospel, not a few of our modern preachers still form their style and some modern preceptors still elaborate their principles after those ancient methods.

It is strange how a slavish adherence to old customs and prejudices is able to affect the taste and apparently the judgement of so many who ought to have the good sense to recognize their errors and the moral courage to abandon them. Some seem to think it almost heretical not to emphasize all the real and imaginary difficulties of preaching which they can discover or create. They seem to think it savours of a want of true zeal if anyone dares to leave the beaten track marked out by his predecessors. The result is that many young priests at the present day have not only imaginary difficulties to contend against, but real difficulties actually created for them. A man may walk with perfect ease, confidence and safety along a plank a yard wide. But when he is persuaded that a dreadful chasm yawns beneath him he is no longer as capable of making the journey or as anxious to attempt it, whether the danger really exists or is only a mere creature of his well-meaning monitor's imagination. So when a young priest is obsessed by the idea that it is suicide to enter the pulpit without having an elaborately prepared discourse already

written out and committed to memory, he either seeks to avoid the ordeal altogether, or succeeds in the attempt only at the risk of a failure which is due to this false impression rather than to the actual concrete difficulty of the task itself.

No doubt one will find it more difficult to address an audience in public than to say the very same things to a few friends in private. The latter is a natural process, but the former is a special art, which, however, is easily acquired by some training and practice. Thus Pope says: "I never could speak in public; and I do not believe that if it was a set thing, I could give an account of a story to twelve friends together, though I could tell it to any three of them with a great deal of pleasure."

A great deal of this slavish policy is due to what Balmes calls "prejudice in favour of a doctrine." "When a man is possessed by a prejudice," he says, "he seeks neither in books nor in things what there is really in them, but only what helps to support his opinions. And the worst of it is that he does so, not infrequently, with the greatest sincerity, believing all the time that he is labouring in the cause of truth. Our education, the masters and authors from whom we have received the first light of a science, the persons with whom we constantly live, or have frequent intercourse, our position or profession, and other such circumstances, powerfully contribute to engender in us a habit of viewing things under one aspect, and always in the same way. . . . Could it be want of sincerity? Certainly not, for they are distinguished for their Christian integrity. . . . Man, before he attempts to lead others astray, often first imposes on himself. He clings to a system."

In much the same way men are often slavish admirers of poets and writers who may have very little claim to real merit. "I took down Thomson," says Dr. Johnson, speaking of Shiels' unreasoning admiration of that poet, "and read aloud a large portion of him, and then asked, 'Is not this fine?' Shiels having expressed the highest admiration, 'Well, Sir,' said I, 'I have omitted every other line.'"

In those days when education was abnormally classical, many old writers made use of a vocabulary which was more of Greek and Latin than of Anglo-Saxon origin. They thus developed what Macaulay calls "a vicious partiality for terms which, long after our speech had been fixed, were borrowed from the Greek and Latin, and which, therefore, even when lawfully naturalized, must be considered as born aliens, not entitled to rank against the king's English."

Not only was the vocabulary of such writers corrupt, but even their general literary style became affected, assuming a learned and laborious form of expression which is very difficult to follow, and which is entirely incapable of conveying any ideas whatever to the uneducated. "Johnson's conversation," says Macaulay, "appears to have been quite equal to his writings in matter, and far superior to them in manner. When he talked he clothed his wit and his sense in forcible and natural expressions. As soon as he took his pen in his hand to write for the public, his style became systematically vicious. All his books are written in a learned language, in a language which nobody hears from his mother or his nurse, in a language in which nobody ever quarrels, or drives

bargains or makes love, in a language in which nobody even thinks. It is clear that Johnson himself did not think in the dialect in which he wrote. The expressions which came first to his tongue were simple, energetic and picturesque. When he wrote for publication, he did his sentences out of English into Johnsonese. His letters from the Hebrides to Mrs. Thrale are the original of that work of which the *Journey to the Hebrides* is the translation; and it is amusing to compare the two versions. 'When we were taken upstairs,' says he in one of his letters, 'a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie.' This incident is recorded in the *Journal* as follows: 'Out of one of the beds on which one of us was to repose started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge.' Sometimes Johnson translated aloud. 'The *Rehearsal*' he said very unjustly, 'has not wit enough to keep it sweet;' then, after a pause, 'it has not vitality enough to preserve it from putrefaction' . . . His constant practice of padding out a sentence with useless epithets, till it became as stiff as the bust of an exquisite, his antithetical forms of expression constantly employed even where there is no opposition in the ideas expressed, his big words wasted on little things, his harsh inversions, so widely different from those graceful and easy inversions which gave variety, spirit and sweetness to the expression of our great old writers, all these peculiarities have been imitated by his admirers and parodied by his assailants, till the public has become sick of the subject."

Yet this is the language and this is the style which some preachers are even still inclined to affect, and which is even sometimes set before the student of

sacred eloquence for his admiration and imitation! So that we have to contend not only against the false systems of the rhetoricians but against the false language and style of learned scribes—elements which are entirely destructive of the very life and soul of plain preaching, for they cause a sermon to need both translation and explanation before it can in a living and effectual manner even begin to convey any portion of divine truth.

CHAPTER VII

FALSE MODELS OF ELOQUENCE

ALTHOUGH the tendency towards the use of "Johnsonese" is gradually being eradicated by the modern necessity for quickness and despatch, and consequent clearness and terseness of expression, it is by no means so apparently diminished in two of the most important agents which the world possesses for the influencing of public opinion—the Pulpit and the Press. The latter is no doubt, in spite of much self-commendation, as artificial and hollow a medium as the former is real and substantial; but at the same time it is one which is capable of exercising a powerful influence over the minds of those who are easily led by surface knowledge and an appearance of book-learning which is generally as shallow as it is arrogant and dictatorial. In the one case, therefore, the use of big words and roundabout expressions is a necessary mask for want of truth and depth, but in the other it is merely an excrescence and a fault which may be at least partly excused by the fact that priests are generally subjected to influences of much the same nature as those which affected the style of Dr. Johnson and his school—the study of the classics; as well as from the additional and perhaps more potent factor that they study the subject-matter of their profession not only in Latin but in the language of theology as well.

We may well, then, coin a word for this vicious language of the pulpit by calling it "Sermonese"—

a word which is not at all so awkward as what it represents, though not so familiar as "Johnsonese" or the now well-known term "Journalese." Both are closely allied to common "Jargon," though in opposite ways, for the language of the Press is generally *parvum in multo,* whereas the vicious language of the pulpit is too pregnant in meaning as well as too weighty in words.

An excellent example of "Jargon" is given by Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch in a lecture on the subject. It is a parody on Hamlet's famous soliloquy, as follows: "To be, or the contrary? Whether the former or the latter be preferred would seem to admit of some difference of opinion; the answer in the present case being of an affirmative or negative character according as to whether one elects on the one hand mentally to suffer the disfavour of fortune, albeit in an extreme degree, or, on the other, boldly to envisage extreme conditions in the prospect of eventually bringing them to a conclusion. The condition of sleep is similar to, if not indistinguishable from, that of death, and with the addition of finality the former might be considered identical with the latter; so that in this connection it might be argued with regard to sleep that, could the addition be effected, a termination might be put to a multiplicity of inconveniences, not to mention a number of downright evils incidental to our fallen humanity, and thus a consummation achieved of a most gratifying nature."

As examples of "Journalese" the same authority quotes the use of the expression "adverse climatic conditions" when "bad weather" is simply meant; and of what he calls "the trick of elegant variation" in the sporting Press by: "Hayward and Fry now

faced the bowling, which apparently had no terrors for the Surrey crack. The old Oxonian, however, took some time in settling to work. . . ."

But perhaps the most common as well as the most misleading use of this extraordinary language of the newspaper Press is to be found in those articles and paragraphs written against the Church and her doctrines by ignorant, uneducated scribes who use technical, philosophical and theological terms with an appearance of learning and scientific thought but without the slightest knowledge of their true meaning and import. They seem to have acquired a peculiar knack of picking up big words and roundabout expressions from stray scraps of anti-Christian "scientists" in those cheap English translations of "rationalistic" literature, and they use them in hackneyed phrases of the significance of which they are altogether ignorant. Even their little god Haeckel complains: "How short is the memory of our journalists, how defective their knowledge of history, and how poor their philosophic education." They remind one of the vain jackdaw in the fable, who searched the woods and fields and collected all sorts of feathers which he stuck all over himself, hoping thereby to deceive Jupiter by his borrowed finery.

In Press literature, then, this vicious style is the result of want of knowledge and education and a trick of vanity to conceal both; whereas in pulpit oratory it is but the natural result of long and intimate acquaintance with the subjects and with the language of sound and solid scientific, philosophical and theological thought and training. Hence the use of long words of classical origin and of abstract for concrete terms is to be carefully guarded against by

the preacher, for it is his special duty to teach and to enlighten rather than to confuse and blind by methods which, if deliberately employed, would be nothing less than the cheapest form of quackery. The active verb and the concrete noun are therefore the very first requisites for a good, clear, plain style. Indefinite expressions, big words and long sentences should be broken up and "translated," otherwise even the most "enlightened" congregation can grasp very little of what we intend to convey. It is really surprising how little of practical, concrete meaning most people derive even from the simplest abstract statements.

There is no doubt that the Irish people of a few generations ago were thoroughly instructed in the principles and practices of our holy faith, as those priests well know who were privileged to attend the last survivors of that period. The natural explanation of this we believe to be the fact that owing to the then universal use of the Gaelic tongue among the faithful in Ireland the pastors were naturally obliged to preach to their flocks in the native language. Their sermons and instructions were not therefore exposed to any of those vicious influences which served to corrupt the eloquence of the pulpit in later days when the English language came into general use. The Celtic tongue is essentially simple and yet far more expressive and more eloquent than English could ever hope to be. Hence there was no need for the preacher to think in one language, write in another and deliver his sermon in a third. He found it as easy and as natural to speak eloquently of the sublimest truths of our holy faith as the people did to understand and follow him thoroughly. His preaching, too, besides being plain and simple in style, could scarcely fail to be plain and

clear in delivery also, for the broad, open vowel sounds of the Gaelic, with the generous assistance of its clear, silvery consonants, make it as easy to be distinct in Irish as it is difficult to be so in English without some special gift or training and a special effort. Needless to say, both these qualities enhanced the power and the charm of Irish eloquence, for all the orator's force could be exerted to the utmost limit of expression if necessary. It was therefore a pleasure for the Irish pastor to instruct his flock as it was for his people to listen to him. And the consequence was that he was entirely free from the greatest temptation to neglect the duty of preaching which seems constantly to beset those who have to select suitable words and expressions from the amazing variety which modern English presents to them.

Indeed, to preach ought to be a labour of love, and therefore of pleasure, for all priests. It is not necessary that one should suffer as a sign or as a proof of his zeal, for much hard work may be done by an enthusiast in any cause without feeling pain or distress in his labours. "Love feels no burthen, values no labours" says the *Imitation of Christ* (iii, v). "Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear, because fear hath pain" (1 John iv, 18), says St John.

CHAPTER VIII

FALSE MODELS OF PREACHING

VARIOUS examples of fine sermons are sometimes held up to the student as models of sacred eloquence. But however splendid some of them may be in themselves, and however well suited they may have been to the special time, circumstances and congregations on the occasion of their delivery, it is quite certain that such learned and polished compositions would not be suitable, even if they were possible of achievement, for what may be called constant and regular consumption. Besides, we must remember that they were never delivered exactly as they have come down to us in cold print and must have owed much of their original effect to the personal charm and power of their original preachers.

Good preaching may be compared to good catering. St Paul makes use of this idea when he says to the Corinthians: "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal. As unto little ones in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not meat; for you were not able as yet. But neither are you now able; for you are yet carnal" (1 Cor. iii, 1, 2); and to the Hebrews: "You have need to be taught what are the first elements of the words of God: and you are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that is a partaker of milk is unskilful in the word of justice; for he is a little child. But strong meat is for the perfect; for them who by custom have their strength exercised to

the discerning of good and evil" (Heb. v, 12-14). The same might with truth be said of the average congregations of the present day, and hence it will be the duty of the priest to provide them with such wholesome spiritual food as they may be capable of easily, regularly and profitably digesting.

To provide a man with even the daintiest dishes in rare but splendid banquets, with elaborate and extensive menus, would not be to feed him properly. Good wholesome food, plain but substantial, provided at regular and frequent intervals, will be more likely to prolong his life in health and strength. To such a one a special feast will at times and on rare occasions be welcome and even useful. So, too, those fine models of pulpit eloquence may be useful on occasion for stirring up enthusiasm at certain periods by their more elaborate and appealing qualities. But they would not be sufficient or even suitable for the spiritual health and strength of the people as a staple article of consumption.

In the first place, the elaborate anatomy of such compositions is too difficult of assimilation by the people, as it is of preparation by the priest. As in some of the French models, too, neatness, elegance and quaintness of treatment give them an unnatural and inflated appearance. No doubt many of these discourses produced extraordinary effects when they were originally delivered. But in many cases such effects were merely hysterical outbursts of feeling on the part of sentimental and highly-strung crowds, who were easily overcome by the circumstances of the occasion. Such sermons may no doubt be good in their way, and for the time, but their effects are not always the most useful or the most lasting. It seems more to

the purpose when a sermon appeals to the individual soul and leads a sinner to enter into himself rather than get out of hand as it were by giving public expression to a fit of uncontrollable emotion under extraordinary influences of time, place, circumstances and disposition. Similar effects to those produced by some great French preachers on occasion have often been caused by the frenzied spirit of fanaticism in those so-called religious revivals in England and elsewhere. But we have no proof that in either case the apparent good effects were more than artificial, or that, such as they were, they lasted any longer than the hysterical outbursts which seemed mostly to have constituted them. We have no fault to find with such productions as temporary expedients, but they cannot be recommended as examples for imitation in the regular and constant preaching of the gospel. These are altogether different from the usual "mission sermons." The latter, though evoking an unusual amount of enthusiasm and religious fervour, and appealing more to the passions than the ordinary Sunday sermon, are nevertheless addressed to those who, it might be said, come in cold blood to hear something to their soul's advantage. And the results are observable in the increase in the number of those who approach the holy sacraments of Penance and the blessed Eucharist rather than in the loudness or the frequency of their public demonstrations of conversion.

As far as the treatment of a subject is concerned, as apart from the language or style employed, it is merely necessary to follow the natural order, as it presents itself to the mind of the preacher. And priests, even the least accomplished, have by their

years of study and systematic habit of thought, acquired at least the faculty of thinking in logical and orderly grooves. Two years at philosophy, and three or four at theology, not to mention their other studies, must have a very decided effect on even the most ordinary intellect; so that the mind of the priest can automatically, as it were, evolve a logical and orderly train of thought and expression with regard to those very subjects in which he has been trained so to think with depth and with method, and in which, from the very nature of his profession, even as an ordinary Christian he must always take a more than ordinary interest. Thoughts, especially on familiar and welcome subjects, arrange themselves naturally in most people, and preaching is but a public expression of a certain class of them. So that it is not so necessary, therefore, for the priest to write his sermons as so many seem to suppose. To assume that it is always necessary to write them is as foolish as it would be to assume that a sermon should never be written. Even if it be not necessary it will often be useful to write a sermon, especially after it has been preached. And even he who can preach much better without writing at all may often find it advantageous to commit his thoughts to paper, if only to preserve them, for "he may well walk afoot who leads his horse in his hand."

It has been said that one could read the speeches of Pitt and Fox almost as they were delivered. As a matter of fact Pitt attempted to correct only two of his speeches for publication, and those from the reporters' account of them. But he found it impossible to do so and had to write them out afresh. Which shows in the first place that they had not been written

by him before delivery; in the second place, that had they been written as they were delivered they could not have read well; and in the third place, that had they been delivered as he afterwards wrote them they would not have been the same speeches at all.

In considering the advantages or the necessity of writing sermons for delivery we must therefore be very careful to distinguish between the mere personal experience or practice of individuals and the laying down of a general principle for all. Because a certain preacher with a great reputation as a pulpit orator finds it necessary to write his sermons, either because he is afraid to trust himself to the use of ordinary plain language in the pulpit, or because he desires to deliver polished discourses in accord with his reputation, he has thereby no right to state a case and lay down a rule for ordinary preachers, who perhaps deliver fifty or a hundred ordinary sermons to his one or two special ones. And it is with the ordinary plain sermon and the ordinary plain preacher that we have to deal at present; with those who preach in season and out of season, bearing the burden of the day and the heats; whose ordinary and constant and regular work is preaching, and whose appearance in the pulpit even on special occasions is consequently no rare event, nor a very exciting one, being to him, indeed, very much like his presence on the altar or in the confessional.

Some lay down the writing of sermons as a means of acquiring order of thought and exactness of expression, probably relying on those words of Bacon: "Reading maketh a full man, conference a ready man, and *writing an exact man*," as if there were no other means of securing the same end, and those the

most perfect; almost all of which even Bacon himself includes in his very next sentence: "Histories make men wise; poets witty; the mathematics subtle; natural philosophy deep; moral, grave; logic and rhetoric able to contend: *Abeunt studia in mores.*" Which shows the wisdom of the Church in prescribing and maintaining such a course of study for the young ecclesiastic as includes those several branches.

Like Johnson, when a preacher "takes his pen in his hand to write for the public, his style becomes systematically vicious . . . The expressions which come first to his tongue are simple, energetic and picturesque" in many instances. A priest may not be very learned in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but surely he must be learned in Christian doctrine generally after so many years of systematic theoretical and practical study and of personal experience. Besides, the chief value of any study consists not so much in the amount of actual knowledge acquired from it as in the mental training to which the student is subjected during the process of attempting to acquire it. Hence it is that priests are in the true sense almost the only really educated members of the average community. And this arises from the fact that their special study and training must necessarily be conducted on such true, exact, and conscientious lines as no member of any other profession is either able to enjoy or willing to submit to. We indeed "hold the form of sound words" and "the good things committed to [our] trust by the Holy Ghost" (*cf.* 1 Tim. i, 13, 14); and we enjoy the advantage of having acquired such by the systematic and wisely directed study of "that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that [we] may be able to exhort in

sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus i, 9).

Every priest, therefore, from the very fact that he has been passed for ordination by responsible examiners, no matter how inferior his intellectual attainments may be in comparison with those of his brethren in the ministry, is an educated expert in his own line at least, and ought therefore to be able even at a moment's notice to give a fair account of any point of Catholic doctrine to his people. But he is often told that this is a rare gift, in spite of the fact that every Catholic layman of average intelligence is expected to be "always ready to satisfy every one that asketh [him] a reason of that hope which is in [him] (1 Pet. iii, 15).

Let us not, therefore, be discouraged by reading those masterpieces of pulpit oratory which are so much to be admired, or imagine that in order to preach well we must write a somewhat similar sermon on a subject which is entirely new to us. *Prædicator prædicando fit.* The Curé of Ars was neither clever, nor a scholar, nor an orator. He was neither a Bossuet nor a Cicero, neither a Massillon nor a Demosthenes, but by his plain and simple sermons and instructions he "convinced of sin, of justice and of judgement" and converted more sinners than many justly celebrated preachers ever brought to the stool of repentance, though his converts did not proclaim the fact so loudly or so publicly as those of some, but in sorrow and in secret confessed their sins in the sacred tribunal of penance, taking very good care that none but the priest should know the secrets of their hearts or the depths of the sloughs from which their souls had been rescued. "I know nothing more sig-

nificant in all human history," says Canon Sheehan, "than what is recorded in the life of Père Lacordaire. In the very zenith of his fame, his pulpit in Toulouse was deserted, whilst the trains of France were bringing tens of thousands of professional men, barristers, statesmen, officers, professors, to a wretched village church only a few miles away. What was the loadstone? A poor country parish priest, uninformed, illiterate, uncouth—but a saint. And I know nothing more beautiful or touching in all human history than the spectacle of the great and inspired Dominican, coming to that village chapel, and kneeling for the blessing of M. Vianney, and listening, like a child, to the evening catechetical lecture, delivered in a weak voice, and probably with many a halt for a word, by the saint of Ars" (*My New Curate,* p. 360).

CHAPTER IX

THE SPOKEN WORD

TO give them their due, some of our preceptors do not themselves seem to be so absolutely convinced of the truth of some of their own statements with regard to the alleged difficulties of preaching and the system of preparation necessary as to stand to them consistently. They are constantly modifying, qualifying, and sometimes even flatly contradicting previous statements which, in the light of facts and circumstances afterwards considered, they recognize to be untenable without some such distinction.

A great deal of this change of front is due no doubt to the fact that they are at one time thinking of one form of preaching and at another time of another; whilst in the main their attention seems to be devoted to the formal discourse for a formal occasion, known as the "set sermon." This species of composition is as a general rule written out in full, committed to memory and delivered verbatim. As Montaigne says: "They do not dig to the root . . . they only debate upon the branches."

Under this heading we do not mean to include what may be classed as a "special sermon," although there may not be anything very special about it, except perhaps that it may be an extraordinary effort on the part of the pastor to stir up his congregation with a more lengthy and formal discourse than usual on such subjects as, for example, the Four Great Truths, Penance, the Blessed Eucharist, the Paschal Precept and the like. The "set sermon" is more of a learned

and showy disquisition for the *occasion*, whatever the subject may be, than for ordinary use in normal circumstances. It is, therefore, an *occasional* sermon in more senses than one. To follow the advice of some on the composition of even such a sermon one would imagine that the preacher had to indulge in original research of a most difficult, intricate and elaborate nature, as if he were investigating altogether new ground and were going to write a book about it, and that the fate of Christianity depended upon the results of his labours.

No wonder then the young priest is led by such ideas to dread the ordeal of preparation, not to mention that of delivery, although he ought to be consoled by the fact that the very same authorities admit that such preparation is not always possible.

Hence some confuse the written with the spoken word, and speak of sermons in general as if they were all of one species, with the result that the regular "set sermon" is the kind first presented to the mind of the student, who is accordingly advised very often to write all his sermons. Now what is the use of an exercise that can be so rarely practised if such is recommended to him by way of practice? The writing of essays and the practice of composition generally should have been an important part of his school and college curriculum. If this has been neglected, it is foolish to imagine that the writing of a few discourses will so far influence the expression or the skill of the young ecclesiastic as thus to insist upon it as a necessary means to that end. By the time a student comes to write his first sermon he is about as good or as bad as he will ever be in the art of composition. Hence we hold that more

attention should be paid, especially in the beginning, to the delivery of simple discourses than to the writing of elaborate ones. In no other art or science that we know of would a professor begin to instruct his pupils by requiring from them a sample of finished work of the highest and most difficult species.

Let us then take a student as we find him—either an adept at composition, or a comparative stranger to the art. Of the two we should much prefer the latter, if such there be, as he would be in less danger of using high-flown language or of indulging in swollen sentiment, and his sermons would therefore be much more likely to be solid, simple and intelligible to the people. The former might write a more readable discourse, but the latter would be more likely to preach a plain sermon. "There are some," says Quintilian, "who, neglecting strength of sentiment and weight of matter, if they can only force their empty words into a figurative style, imagine themselves great writers; and therefore continually string together such ornaments. . . . But when the subject becomes deeply serious . . . who can bear the orator who, in affected language and balanced phrases, endeavours to express wrath, commiseration, or earnest entreaty? On all such occasions a solicitous attention to words weakens passion; and when so much art is shown, there is suspected to be little sincerity."

Indeed, writing is but one way of expressing our thoughts, and that by no means the most natural, the most perfect, or the most satisfactory. This is no doubt due to the necessarily mechanical nature of the process and the fixed quality of the result, for even the warmest flow of sentiment seems like a frozen cataract when reduced to cold print. And the reverse process seems to be necessary when we wish to

translate the written word into the warmth of living speech. It is said that frozen meat will not be fit to eat unless it has been carefully thawed before cooking. So we must first assimilate the sentiments of the written or printed theme in the warmth of our own hearts before we can proceed to give adequate expression to them in our delivery.

There is then a certain restriction or confinement on our thoughts as we write, a kind of brake upon our progress, because we cannot write as quickly as we think. Our thoughts outdistance our words; but even our speech runs away from our pen. Hence it is only the practised thinker that can become the successful writer. So we should sit down to write what we think, rather than to think what we shall write, as an old adviser tells us. And writing is only one of the means of securing accuracy of expression. But that the writing of a few sermons will make up for lack of previous training and experience in this direction is as foolish to imagine as the action of the Indian who slept on a feather because he had heard that feathers make splendid beds.

We do not, therefore, say that sermons should never be written. But we hold that it is generally better for the regular and constant preacher not to write them, even if it were always possible for him to do so, for the spoken word is the more natural, the more living and effectual, and therefore the more desirable. Some time ago the scientific world was priding itself on the chemical manufacture of synthetic foods, in which all the apparently necessary substances were artificially combined in the exact proportions of perfect nourishment value. But the food did not nourish, and those who were fed upon it died of hunger. Then it was discovered that those mys-

terious, subtle, intangible elements called *vitamines* were wanting in the artificially constructed compounds, but, vitally necessary as they were, they could not be introduced by any artificial process, and so the food was a failure except on paper. In the same way there are some forms of preaching, as, for instance, the catechetical instruction, which simply cannot be written and live. As soon as they are transferred to paper some subtle change takes place. Some vital element seems to evanesce. To write them is to kill them. But "the Word of God is living and effectual" (Heb. iv, 12).

It is only when one speaks at random that he speaks in a disorderly and disconnected fashion. If his mind has been trained to think in logical and orderly grooves he is not likely to speak at random in ordinary circumstances. And surely every priest possesses such a knowledge of the truths of our holy faith and such a command of simple English that he can find words to express in fair order and in plain and simple style something of use to others on those subjects which are of such deep and lasting interest and personal concern to himself and every member of his congregation.

No doubt there are some preachers who, finding by experience that they have the fatal gift of being able to keep on talking even though they have nothing to say, soon develop into mere text-spinners and indulge in vain repetitions, tiresome platitudes, and deadly monotony in the pulpit. But such would just as easily "dash off" six or eight pages of the same material without its being a bit more useful or interesting. It is not because they do not write their sermons, therefore, that they preach so wretchedly but because they neither study nor think of matter for sermons,

but remain in the same old mental (and spiritual) groove into which through want of energy they have allowed themselves to sink. Their mental powers are paralyzed from sheer inactivity. They have neglected to feed the divine fire of eloquence with which they were originally gifted and are now wasting their breath blowing on the few remaining embers.

Instead then of thinking of a set sermon, or a formal discourse of any kind, let the young priest at first just think of something interesting to *tell the people*. "I am very well pleased," says Montaigne, "with the Milesian girl, who, observing the philosopher to be always contemplating the celestial arch; and to save his eyes still gazing upward laid something in his way that he might stumble at, to put him in mind that it would be time to take up his thoughts about things that are in the clouds when he had provided for those that were under his feet. Doubtless she advised him very well rather to look to himself than to gaze at the heavens. For, as Demosthenes says by the mouth of Cicero, '*Quod est apte pedes, nemo spectat: cœli scrutantur plagas.*' But our condition will have it so, that the knowledge of what we have in hand is as remote from us, and as much above the clouds, as that of the stars."

The same truth is conveyed by the story of the sailors who hailed a passing ship and asked for water, as they were dying of thirst. The answer they received was: *Drop your bucket where you are.* They did so, and found to their surprise that they had been sailing for miles in the midst of a rich stream of clear, fresh water, looking for someone to hand them some.

Let us then look to what is within our reach, and when we have to preach there will be no necessity to

seek in a multitude of books information which we already possess if we only reach for it and make use of it. *"Prædicando prædicatores fimus,"* says St Francis de Sales. *"Hoc unum dixero: sat superque scit prædicator, si modo videri non velit plus scire quam sciat. Si digne de mysterio Trinitatis dicere nequiverimus, eo argumento abstineamus. Si idonei non simus exponere istud Joannis 'In principio' supersedere licet. Sunt alia majoris utilitatis argumenta; nec omnia omnes facere necesse est."*

There is only one element which can affect the current of a young priest's thoughts in the pulpit, which can prevent him from "thinking on his feet," as it is said; and that is the unusual and sometimes for him entirely novel circumstances which surround him in the pulpit. But the art of public speaking consists in his accommodation to such circumstances by scientific knowledge and practical exercise. In this very particular, however, his training may have been somewhat imperfect. But it is never too late to supply the deficiency by care and attention in the selection and preparation of his sermons or instructions. When he knows he has something to say, and when he has confidence in his power to say it, as proved by his own very thoughts on the subject, he need have no fear of failure. It is possible that, coming from such or such a seminary, he may have a reputation to sustain, or perhaps even one to establish. If he is persuaded of his duty in this particular he will no doubt already have taken care to achieve his object by means best known to himself. For such there is no need of our advice, as we are here concerned only with the principles of plain preaching.

CHAPTER X

LITERARY STYLE

A NOT infrequent cause of want of confidence in many may be traced to the irresponsible remarks of incompetent or thoughtless critics, whose only claim to literary ability consists in their love of finding fault with the "style" of preachers and writers. They seem to set up a kind of court for themselves where, without authority or sanction, they act as judge and jury, as police and executioners, and always bring the prisoner in "guilty." Although such may have no idea at all of what constitutes style the strange thing is that they are often listened to as if they did, for style is so elusive an element to most people that the most generic, indefinite, and misleading statements with regard to it are often received as gospel, and those who know they know very little about it are frequently deceived by those who affect to know all, though both may be equally ignorant. In fact there is more cant indulged in about "style" than about any other subject under the sun. A few cheap consecrated formulæ are uttered which have no particular meaning in the minds of the critics. As Cardinal Newman says in a parallel instance: "I am far from denying that some among them know what they are talking about; but it would be satisfactory in a particular case to be sure of the fact; for it seems to me that those household words may stand in a man's mind for a something or other, very glorious indeed, but very misty."

In the first place, when one criticizes the style of another he ought to be able to point out something more definite and more concrete than the mere fact that he does not like it, or does not approve of it. That may not be a matter of style at all, but rather a matter of taste, and may be founded entirely on personal prejudice or on the nature of the opinions expressed rather than on the particular literary dress in which their author clothes them. It is a cheap and generally safe method of exalting one's self at another's expense, a kind of assumption of literary excellence by proxy. This may be a source of consolation to preachers and writers who do not flatter themselves on the possession of such gifts as are often so freely denied to them. Yet preachers especially must be on their guard against flattery, for, by a strange contradiction, the criticism offered to them personally is generally of the most agreeable nature and is thus the more likely to be believed.

In the matter of style, as in so many others, according to Montaigne, "the opinions of men are received according to ancient belief, by authority and upon trust, as if it were religion and law. 'Tis received as a gibberish, which is commonly spoken . . . as a firm and solid body, that is no more to be shaken, no more to be judged of."

Some confuse language with style. Others seem to confine the meaning of the term to the strictly elegant, and so are inclined to imagine that even the flowery variety is *per se* superior to the simple, although the simplest style may be the most beautiful and even the plainest may be the most useful.

It is impossible to give an exact definition of style. All we can say is that it is the peculiar and personal

manner of expressing one's ideas; one's way of saying things; one's characteristic habit of thought as expressed in his writing or speaking. It is not mere language, or grammar, or vocabulary. Neither is it the mere flow of sentiment or train of thought, though all these have naturally some influence on its character. Nor is it, according to Cardinal Newman, "an addition from without to the matter treated of, a sort of ornament superinduced, or a luxury indulged in, by those who have time and inclination for such vanities . . . as if *one* man could do the thought and *another* the style."

As the chief object of a speaker or a writer is to convey his ideas to others, it is evident that the very first essential quality of a good style is *clearness* of expression. "Discourse," says Quintilian, "ought always to be obvious, even to the most careless and negligent hearer; so that the sense shall strike his mind, as the light of the sun does our eyes, though they are not directed upward to it. We must study, not only that every hearer may understand us, but that it shall be impossible for him not to understand."

This quality of style is so necessary that nothing else can supply for its absence. It is all the more necessary then that our preaching shall be plain and easily understood when profane writers are not permitted a breach of this important natural canon, even at the expense of the most beautiful flights of fancy and the most elaborate ornaments of language. We should always be able to follow a writer or a speaker with ease, without having to return to a word, a phrase, or a sentence in order to grasp his full meaning.

It is evident then that in order to secure this very

necessary quality of clearness our words must be pure English, properly placed and connected. Hence a good pure style is free from all foreign words, phrases and idioms. So the use of words of classical origin is as fatal to purity of style as it is fatal to clearness and simplicity. The best way to avoid this fault as much as possible is to aim at avoiding big words and long sentences, as we shall then be more likely to use words of Anglo-Saxon origin, as these are generally the shortest and the most expressive, whilst those of Greek or Latin origin are the very opposite.

It must not be supposed, however, that long sentences must always be involved sentences, for a sentence may be very long and yet very clear and easy to follow, while even the shortest sentence may be very involved in meaning. At the same time, especially in preaching, we ought not to make a sentence run too long without a break. It is hard to follow a speaker or a writer who inserts a lot of intermediate words, phrases, or explanations, however clear, between the beginning and the end of a sentence. "A crowd of unmeaning words is brought together by some authors," says Quintilian, "who, afraid of expressing themselves after a common and ordinary manner, and allured by an appearance of splendour, surround everything which they mean to say with a certain copious loquacity."

It is unfortunate that the classical and theological training of a priest should render him peculiarly liable to this defect; but up-to-date methods and the modern necessity for neatness and despatch seem to be gradually overcoming the tendency to "copious loquacity," although it is even still regarded by some

as a rather fine style. In any case it is most unsuitable for the pulpit.

Some of the inconvenient results of this involved style are still to be observed in some of the authorized catechisms, and even prayers, in use in many places. An "Act of Hope" is still in use, for instance, in which we read: "I confidently hope to obtain pardon of all my sins, grace to serve thee faithfully in this life, by doing the good works thou hast commanded, and which, with thy assistance, I now purpose to perform, and eternal happiness in the next, through," etc. This is a good example of an involved style, and it would take a very fair student of grammar to analyse and parse it, especially the phrase "eternal happiness in the next," from which all its syntactic relations seem to have been removed as far as possible.

It would be useless to enter more fully here into the discussion of literary style, for, after all, what a preacher has to aim at is rather to tone down and simplify his language in order to secure clearness of expression, than to seek for beauty or artistic ornament in order to please. St Francis de Sales says that the chief object of the preacher is the same as that for which Christ came on earth—"I have come that they may have life, and may have it more abundantly" (John x, 10); and that the chief aim of the pulpit orator should accordingly be to cause those dead in sin to live unto justice, to increase the spiritual life of the just, to root out vice and to plant virtue. Hence, the saint says, two things are necessary—to teach and to convert, *docere et movere*—to enlighten the intellect and to move the will. He will not admit without a distinction, however, a third, which he says is considered necessary by many—*placere*. If the

pleasure is merely that of the soul, that spiritual satisfaction which must naturally arise from the knowledge of what is right and the will to accomplish it, he admits it as a worthy motive, but holds that it is already in this sense included in the other two—"*atque ad hanc delectationem quod attinet, omnino procuranda est, sed ea a docendo et movendo non differt.*"

"*Aliud vero,*" he continues, "*delectationis est genus, quod ex iis non pendet; sed seorsim suas habet partes, sæpiusque doctrinæ et motioni impedimento est. Ea est aurium quædam titillatio, proveniens ex certa elegantia seculari, mundana et profana, quæ tota pendet ex artificio. Et de hac nego pernegoque ecclesiastæ esse cogitandum. Oratoribus seculi illa relinquenda est, histrionibus item et adulatoribus, quorum hoc otiosum est negotium. Isti non Jesum Christum crucifixum, ut nos, sed seipsos prædicant. Non sectamur lenocinia rhetorum, sed veritates piscatorum.*"

A preacher should never descend, however, to any inelegance of language which would ill befit the dignity of his sacred office in the pulpit and the solemnity of the message which he conveys in the name of Christ. But as sermons are heard rather than read, preached rather than written, a certain looseness or diffuseness which would not be admitted in a written composition will not only be lawful in the pulpit but will be found useful and even necessary; for a reader can turn back as often and as far as he wishes, in order to inquire more closely into the author's meaning, whereas, once the words of the preacher have gone forth, they must carry with them for good whatever meaning they may have appeared to convey at the moment of their utterance. So that

what would detract from the merit of a written composition will be even an advantage to the spoken word, since clearness of our meaning and a certain measure of vitality and power will thus be the more certainly secured. The preacher should therefore aim at the happy medium between conciseness and prolixity, at the same time securing both by brevity and simplicity "*ut libenter audiatur . . . secus enim multi sermonem parochialem declinant aut propter tædium sine fructu illum audirent*" (Berardi: *Theologia Pastoralis*).

PART II

EASY PRACTICAL METHODS OF PREACHING

"But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or in doctrine?"—1 Cor. xiv, 6.

CHAPTER XI

PREREQUISITES

IF all priests were as full of faith, piety and zeal as they ought to be, there would be little need to help and still less to encourage them in the preaching of the gospel. If a man is enthusiastic in any cause he is ever and always anxious to devise new ways and fresh means for pushing it forward, and is naturally eloquent upon the subject without having to prepare set speeches, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. xii, 34).

However, we must take the facts as we find them in connection with the causes, whether remote or proximate, which appear to make preaching such a burden and a difficulty for so many who have taken on themselves the duty of going forth to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. Some of the causes of this difficulty have already been referred to, and we have endeavoured to show that they are either purely imaginary, artificially created, or easily eliminated. But the lack of zeal which would cause a priest to regard preaching as a hired servant regards working overtime has a deeper root and needs a more drastic remedy than can be found in the mere mechanical assistance which may be offered to him in books of sermons or treatises on sacred eloquence. These external aids may make the machinery simpler and the labour lighter and more pleasant as well as more successful. But they cannot supply the motive power or eliminate the necessity for personal energy. If the mind of a priest is habitually occupied with a multi-

tude of distracting cares, anxieties, or pleasures, in which his chief duty has little or no share, nor perhaps even a thought, he cannot expect to find himself full of his subject and bursting with anxiety for the time to arrive when he can deliver his message to his people. He must be prepared to meet assistance half way, and must not expect such a wonderful recipe as will supply for his neglect of study and produce both preparation and sermon for him at a moment's notice. A good cook will indeed never be altogether helpless in improvising a meal at short notice, and will be able to make a very tasty dish out of the remains of yesterday's dinner. But there must have been something substantial on yesterday. Otherwise the poor cook will find herself in the quandary of the would-be economical housekeeper who reads in her favourite "Household Hints" a recipe for an inexpensive meal composed of the remains of certain cold dishes, only to find that the latter are so very expensive that if her purse could ever have procured the originals at all there would be no need for the economy proposed. So on occasion a priest may at very short notice fall back on some of the results of his previous study and experience and make a very passable and valid sermon. But that system cannot last him very long. He must be constantly renewing his stock and laying in fresh provisions, or a time will come when his reserves will be used up, for by neglect he will not only fail to acquire more but will even lose the little he already possesses. As in virtue, so in study, not to advance is to recede.

The study of sacred eloquence, then, does not so much provide a preacher with the materials as tell him how to arrange and manage them so as to make them

show to the best advantage with the least possible trouble and with the greatest hope of success. It may even point out where materials may be found. But no one can supply him with what he neglects to provide himself with in the way of motive power, which simply means for him at the very least *a genuine interest in his business.*

All this, however, more aptly applies to one who has for a considerable time neglected study; whose mind is filled with politics, sport, and the productions of light literature; with anything and everything as remote as possible from religion and theology. Such a man requires conversion first, according to the order recommended by St Paul to Timothy: "Take heed to thyself and to doctrine" (1 Tim. iv, 16). With regard to the latter portion of this advice the words of the great apostle are very striking: "Attend unto reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine. Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood. Meditate upon these things, *be wholly in these things:* that thy profiting may be manifest to all" (*Ibid.* 13-15).

In this connection the contrast between two opposite types of clergymen—the one an enthusiastic Puritan, the other a cold-blooded member of the Established Church—is well brought out by Besant in his novel *For Faith and Freedom.* The one "had no other business but to preach;" he "sat among his books" and "to expound the scriptures was as the breath of his nostrils, so that if he could not expound he must die." Of the other the supposed narrator says: "I do not know why Mr. Boscovel took upon himself holy orders. God forbid that I should speak

ill of any in authority, and especially of one who was kind and charitable to all, and refused to become a persecutor of those who desired freedom of conscience and of speech. But if the chief duty of a minister of the Gospel is to preach, then was Mr. Boscovel little better than a dog who cannot bark. He did not preach; that is to say, he could not, like my father, mount the pulpit, Bible in hand, and teach, admonish, argue, and convince without a written word. He read every Sunday morning a brief discourse, which might, perhaps, have instructed Oxford scholars, but would not be understood by the common people. As for arguments on religion, spiritual conversation, or personal experience of grace, he would never suffer such talk in his presence, because it argued private judgement and caused, he said, the growth of spiritual pride. And of those hot Gospellers whose zeal brings them to prison and the pillory, he spoke with contempt. His conversation, I must acknowledge, was full of delight and instruction, if the things which one learned of him were not vanities. He had travelled in Italy and in France, and he loved to talk of poetry, architecture, statuary, medals and coins, antiquities and so forth—things harmless and, perhaps, laudable in themselves, but for a preacher of the Gospel who ought to think of nothing but his sacred calling they are surely superfluities. . . . Then he would tell us of London and the manners of the great; of the king, whom he had seen, and the court, seeming to wink at things which one ought to hold in abhorrence. He even told us of the playhouse, which, according to my father, is the most subtle engine ever invented by the devil for the destruction of souls. Yet Mr. Boscovel sighed to think that he could no longer

visit that place of amusement. He loved also music, and played movingly upon the violoncello; and he could make pictures with pen, pencil, or brush. I have some of his paintings still, especially a picture which he drew of Humphrey playing the fiddle, his great eyes looking upwards as if the music was drawing his soul to heaven. I know not why he painted a halo about his face. Mr. Boscovel also loved poetry, and quoted Shakespeare and Ben Jonson more freely than the word of God."

The young priest just entered on his mission is, however, quite different from either of those types, such as they are. He is full of zeal, piety and energy, and has necessarily a fairly expedite knowledge of his theology and kindred subjects, fresh as he is from the regular and assiduous study of them under the most favourable circumstances; though he may be lacking in the training and experience which is necessary for him to feel as much at ease in the pulpit as he would like; which is a restraint upon his zeal in some measure. So, too, the priest to whom preaching has always been a trouble and an anxiety because he has no confidence in himself, though most studious and most zealous. He may have been discouraged originally by what he has been told or taught, or by what he has studied or read for himself on the subject of sacred eloquence. Or he may have unfortunately broken down on some occasion in the beginning of his career and has since lost his nerve. For all such as these the difficulties of preaching are mostly imaginary.

Let us then take priests as we find them, and let us presume that they are by no means the most brilliant or the most learned, so that we may begin at the

very beginning and convince all that they can occupy the pulpit with ease to themselves and with advantage to their people; so that they may feel at home in it and of use in it, even though they may not preach what might be classed as fine sermons. Indeed it would be very unfair to expect such an effort from a young priest on his first appearance in the pulpit, although, unfortunately, allowance is seldom made for young priests in such circumstances by those in authority. And the young priest himself scarcely ever adverts to the fact that his first flights ought to be low and not far afield, for his first public sermon is generally an attempt at the loftiest and most difficult branch of sacred oratory.

CHAPTER XII

A POPULAR INSTRUCTION

THERE was once a young priest—let us call him Father John—who, before proceeding to a distant mission, was about to spend a long holiday at the home of his parents. On the Saturday morning after his arrival the parish priest paid him a visit and, as a compliment to the young priest and his parents, invited him to celebrate the late Mass and preach on the following day. The invitation to say the Mass was cheerfully accepted, but as to preaching the sermon Father John was "afraid he had no manuscript handy which he would be prepared to deliver at such short notice." And of course it was altogether impossible to dream of preparing a sermon in the course of one day. The good pastor, however, did not press the point, but reminded him that the holy water was to be blessed before Mass and the "*Asperges*" performed—a ceremony that had been neglected for some time but had recently been re-established.

As soon as the parish priest had left, Father John's mother asked him why it was he could not preach "after all the years he had spent in the seminary learning how to do it." He then explained what an intricate affair a sermon was; how the preacher should have his subject prepared beforehand, with proper exordium, arguments, peroration, and the rest; and what a difficult task it was to collect, collate, write out and commit to memory the whole discourse which would result from his labours. His father and mother

looked at each other, shook their heads, said it was wonderful, and that a priest must be very brave and very learned to be able to stand up in the pulpit and face such an ordeal, the difficulties of which they had never before dreamed of, it all seemed so easy when they listened to a sermon.

"And what was that his reverence said about the holy water?" asked his mother.

"Oh" answered Father John, "that is quite easy. It is all here in the Ritual," as he produced the little book from his pocket.

"I often wondered," said his father, "what the priest was doing lately, going up and down the aisle sprinkling the people with holy water."

Naturally the young priest was both eager and willing to answer his parents' questions, and so he was led by degrees into a full and detailed explanation of the origin and use of holy water, the manner of blessing it, the materials used, and significance of all the prayers and ceremonies employed in connection with it. His parents were most deeply interested in every word he said, and, strange to say, most of it was quite new to them.

"I should imagine," said his mother, "that the people would be delighted and surprised if they could only hear you explaining all these things as you have explained them to us. Could you not manage to do so, if you cannot preach the sermon?"

Thus encouraged by the appreciation of his parents, and by the consciousness of his power of finding words as he required them, Father John resolved to gratify their wishes, and straightway began to look up all the available information in his possession. He was in turn himself both surprised and delighted

when he found how easy it was to arrange any new matter he came across in his search on the very same lines as he had unconsciously adopted in his previous naturally rough and ready explanation. He was so struck in particular by the beautifully significant words of the *Miserere*, recited during the ceremony of the "*Asperges*" that he resolved to begin his remarks by quoting them: "Sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed: wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow" (Ps. 1, 9). He made a careful translation of the words of the Ritual used throughout the ceremony in order that he might be able to read them in English from the pulpit without delay.

Relieved from all anxiety about having to "preach," he was not in an excited frame of mind, but was rather in a pleasurably anxious condition, having been assured and convinced in himself that he had something of interest to tell the people.

Sunday came, and he read the usual announcements. Then, taking the Ritual in his hand, and spreading the few pages of his translation in front of him, he quoted the words of the "*Asperges,*" and began in a wholly unconventional manner to call attention to the double ceremony he had performed before Mass—in the sacristy in the blessing of the holy water, and in the church in the sprinkling of the altar and the people. He then announced his intention of explaining in as simple a manner as possible everything of interest or importance in connection with both.

It was some time before he arrived at the reading of the translation which he had prepared. The Ritual he found he did not require at all, as the order and

nature of the various ceremonies had now become quite familiar to him. He explained the meaning of "exorcism" and of "blessing"; the mystic significance of salt as a sign of wisdom, health and spiritual life in the soul; of water as a sign of cleansing and purity of conscience; and their commingling in the form of a cross as a sign of the union that exists between the human and the divine natures in Christ; and read all the exorcisms, blessings and prayers from his English translation.

He continued by showing the spiritual advantages to be derived from the pious use of holy water, explaining its nature as a sacramental, referring to the necessity of contrition and the state of grace necessary in order to gain the indulgences attached; and wound up a very interesting and useful discourse of about twenty-five minutes by several practical recommendations.

The result was that during the week the local chemist was kept busy with requests for small bottles with sprinkler tops; the Catholic repository sold quite a large number of holy water fonts, directing the customers where to procure small sponges to fit them. And when the parish priest had to bless a fresh supply of holy water on the following Wednesday, he prefaced the ceremony with the remark: "I knew he would forget it;" for the good man had no idea that the supply blessed by Father John had already been exhausted.

When the young priest came home after Mass he was asked by his mother if he would be so good as to write out for her some of the prayers and explanations he had given, as she was anxious to send them to some distant friends. Father John complied with

her request and wrote out in full all that he remembered to have said, including the translation he had made, put his text at the head of it, and suddenly discovered to his great surprise and gratification that what he had written looked like just a regular sermon! He could point out all those varied and wonderful parts which used to frighten him so much when he first heard about them, for his composition had a text, an introduction, a body and a peroration, all in order. He had first preached a sermon and then written it!

Then he began to consider preaching from a standpoint altogether different from his previous habitual one. He glanced over a work on the Sacramentals, a subject which now seemed to take his special fancy. He foresaw how interesting it would be to explain, as he had already explained holy water, the remaining subjects there dealt with, such as beads, candles, scapulars, medals, statues and so forth, until he came to the conclusion that if the Sacraments themselves and their ceremonies were added to the list, it would take him years to tell the people all about the multitude of interesting prayers, practices, ceremonies and pious objects which were in common use among them. And he resolved to make a special study of this particular branch of instruction, for he already foresaw its peculiar advantages to the people and to himself.

CHAPTER XIII

A HOMILY

NOTWITHSTANDING his initial success, Father John had still a kind of nervous dread of "preaching a sermon." But his unreasoning fear of the pulpit had vanished. He was, therefore, in a kind of transition stage between hope and fear in general. He felt a peculiar anxiety to go forth and tell the people all that he was conscious of having in his mind, to tell them of the many interesting subjects which had recently come under his notice in a practical, concrete and living form; so that he was almost impatient to begin a work which he now saw would take him years of unremitting labour to accomplish, but labour of a quite different nature from that which he had always previously anticipated. Yet he was puzzled as to his method of procedure.

However his mind was soon turned into another groove. The parish priest was ordered by his medical adviser to take an extended holiday, and he asked as a favour that Father John should take his place during his absence. A short time before, the young priest would not have even dreamed of attempting such an ordeal on account of the necessity for preaching. But now he was even glad of the opportunity, for he foresaw that he could quite easily continue to tell the people many interesting things for a much longer period than he could afford to remain in the parish. So the necessary arrangements were made and he soon found himself the only priest in the parish, with

two Masses to celebrate and evening devotions every Sunday.

"Did you forget to read the Epistle and Gospel?" asked his father one day shortly after. "I noticed that next Sunday is the day for our sermon on hell fire. We'll miss it for the first time in many a year."

"What do you mean?" asked Father John.

"Of course you have never been at home at this time since you went to college, and probably never heard it," answered his father. "It is the sermon the parish priest preaches every year on the Gospel."

On further inquiry Father John discovered that the worthy pastor had a stereotyped sermon on hell which he regularly delivered every year on the Fifth Sunday after Pentecost, from the words: "Ye shall be in danger of hell fire," found in the Gospel of that Sunday.

Father John got a prayer-book immediately and looked up the Gospel of that Sunday. He saw that as a whole it had no very great bearing on the doctrine of eternal punishment, although the words "hell fire" were actually mentioned. He naturally took the opportunity of explaining to his parents the real meaning of the term, which led him by degrees to explain the whole Gospel, just in the same manner as he had on one occasion explained that particular portion of sacred Scripture during a class examination. It is a Gospel which is full of what may be called "technicalities," such as the terms "Scribes," "Pharisees," "raca," "fool," and "hell fire," the last-mentioned words having been seized upon by the worthy pastor as a peg to hang what was no doubt an excellent sermon on the eternal punishment of the damned—a by no means uncommon practice with

some who seem to be able to find an excuse for working off a favourite sermon on any Sunday of the year if there is even the remotest reference to anything connected with it in the Gospel of the day.

However, Father John successfully explained who the Scribes and Pharisees were; what the nature of their "justice" was; and how generally defective were their practices of religion in the sight of Almighty God, being wanting in the proper spirit, and thus as a result taking notice only of the actual crime and none of the inward desire or the occasion of it. He showed that as a consequence they were very uncharitable in thought, word and deed, and neglected "the weightier things of the law; judgement, and mercy, and faith" (Matt. xxiii, 23), while they paid great attention to unimportant ceremonies.

This naturally led to a brief explanation of the difference between the Old Law and the New Law in general, as between the letter and the spirit of obedience to God's commands. And the words of our Divine Master: "Whosoever shall be angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgement," etc., caused him to explain in detail the difference between the various offences referred to, as indicated by the different natures of the various tribunals to which those accused of them were respectively answerable, namely, "the judgement," or lesser court; "the Council," or Sanhedrim, where the highest causes were tried; and the "Gehenna of fire," which was used by our divine Master in a two-fold sense; as well as the literal meaning and real significance of the terms "raca" and "fool," which were the most offensive epithets amongst the Jews.

Having thus cleared the ground, as it were, Father John was able to show the great importance of the

spirit of charity which Christ strove to impress upon us; how its presence was the true sign of a Christian, and its absence a proof of hostility to Christ. The concluding words of the Gospel showed the practical conclusion to be drawn from the entire extract, given in the very words of our divine Master himself.

"But what is the part called the Epistle about?" asked the priest's father. "I can generally make more out of the Gospel."

"Let me see," said Father John. And he began to read it.

"Why," he exclaimed, "as a matter of fact, the Epistle seems to be about the very same thing as the Gospel—the spirit of true charity. It shows from the words of St Paul that the apostle had already experienced the truth of his divine Master's test of his friends and his enemies. Indeed I must go now and look up a commentary, for I can see that it would be very useful if I could put all this before the people on Sunday in an orderly and connected manner, and with a more ample and accurate knowledge of all these terms and their significance. I am afraid I shall have to postpone the explanation of the Rosary which I had intended to give. But perhaps I can do that better at Vespers."

The result was that Father John found himself preaching twice every Sunday, and sometimes even three times!—and actually writing two sermons a week, for his first experience taught him that for the present at any rate it would be just as well to preserve some of the concrete results of his reading and study by writing out what he remembered to have said in the pulpit. Strange to say, he found this to be quite easy, much easier and far more agreeable than he had ever found the writing of sermons in

college, for he no longer hesitated in pain upon the brink, or chilled himself by slow degrees of ineffectual progress, but went right in and kept right on, his thoughts flowing freely in an even stream and his pen responding bravely. He was, perhaps, unaware of the fact that he had never before given half the *live* attention to any sermon that he gave to each and every one of his instructions from the pulpit which he now occupied every week. He was now thinking in a living, concrete, practical way, and giving expression to his thoughts in a corresponding orderly and practical manner.

One great light dawned on him, however. And that was the apparently peculiar manner in which the Epistle and the Gospel seemed to deal with the same general subject, though in somewhat different ways, for he carefully compared both for several successive Sundays and glanced over some of the others. In some the connection was quite apparent. In others it did not appear quite so clear. And others again he found he could not quite reconcile to each other at first sight, though from his actual experience of those he had explained from the pulpit he felt that there was something common to both which would no doubt appear on closer investigation if he were actually preparing to give a regular live explanation of them to the people, for then he knew that he would study them more closely and more keenly and with a more practical eye.

In any case, whether this were so or not, he did not for the time much care to inquire, for he was now both able and willing to preach a simple homily at the late Mass every Sunday and to give a popular instruction at evening devotions.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EPISTLES AND GOSPELS

IN his study of the Epistles and Gospels Father John had unwittingly discovered a rich mine of hidden gold. He had never indeed heard of any such apparent mutual connection between the Epistle and Gospel as he clearly perceived in those which he had carefully examined and compared in detail. He had never seen any reference to it; and he came to the conclusion that, from all the sermons he had heard, and from all the books that he had read, no one as far as he knew was aware of it. He accordingly began to make inquiries among the priests of his acquaintance. Some seemed to take no interest whatever in the matter. Others listened to his "new-fangled theory" with a certain amount of amused toleration for his youthful ardour, and quizzingly asked him "what he was going to do about it." While some denied that there was any intended connection between the selected passages beyond whatever accidental coincidence Father John might be pleased to discover or to imagine in them.

Now when we carefully examine this matter for ourselves we must come to the conclusion that some such mutual relation must have been intended by those who first selected and arranged these extracts as appropriate readings for the various Sundays and Feasts of the year. The Church Calendar is designed to be a reflection as well as a commemoration of the chief events in the life of our divine Master. Begin-

ning with the First Sunday of Advent there is set before us in regular order the promise of the Redeemer, its fulfilment in Christ, and its fruits in his life, death, resurrection and ascension, the coming of the Paraclete at Pentecost, and the teaching of those truths which the holy Spirit himself was to show us, according to the promise of Jesus: "When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth" (John xvi, 13).

One of the ways in which the Church endeavours to impress these truths on the minds of her children is by presenting for our consideration each Sunday and Feast some carefully selected passages from the holy Word of God itself, known as "the Epistles and Gospels." Extracts from the Epistles were usually read in public for the early Christians before the celebration of the Divine Mysteries, according to the custom of the Jews, who began the Sabbath service in the synagogues by the reading of passages from Moses and the Prophets (*cf.* Acts xiii, 15). The Epistle is read before the Gospel as well to follow the ancient custom as to commemorate in a mystic manner the practice of our divine Master, who was accustomed to send some of his disciples before him to those places he was about to visit (*cf.* Luke ix, 52).

The present arrangement of the Epistles and Gospels was made by St Jerome at the request of Pope Damasus in the fourth century. We do not know the exact plan which the saint had in view in his selection and distribution of the various passages as we find them. But we may be quite certain that he had some definite intention in selecting and placing each extract, for he surely did not carry out the work entrusted to him by merely picking each passage at

random, but had in view the peculiar appropriateness of every single one of them to the particular Sunday or Feast to which he respectively appointed them.

Now if the Epistle and Gospel are both appropriate to the *dies qua talis*, it follows that they must be mutually appropriate to each other as well, on the principle that "things which are equal to the same thing are equal to each other." They must therefore have some main idea in common with each other, as well as with the day to which they are appointed. And as the Sundays and Feasts are arranged in a correlated and consecutive cycle, it follows also that they must have some relation with those that precede and follow in their order throughout the ecclesiastical year.

This is quite evident in some cases, as, for instance, in the selections for the First Sunday of Advent, the Epiphany, the First Sunday of Lent, Easter Sunday, Pentecost Sunday, etc., in all of which the reason for the selection of each particular passage is absolutely apparent, the main idea, principal subject, or special lesson, being clear, prominent, definite, and peculiarly appropriate for the particular occasion.

What, then, is the main idea, special subject, common lesson, or, as it may be called, *the greatest common factor*, of those remaining passages appointed for the various other days of the year respectively? It is certainly not so apparent at first sight as in those just mentioned. But, nevertheless, we must assume that St Jerome was thoroughly consistent in his intention throughout the entire series, and that he had accordingly some such main idea in mind when selecting and assigning to its proper place every single extract.

In studying the Epistles and Gospels, then, it would be interesting to endeavour to penetrate as it were the mind of St Jerome, discover his probable *ratio* for each selection, and thus seek to re-establish some such plan and reconstruct some such system as he must have had in mind in his work of distribution. The result will be found to be a consecutive and correlated series which not only shows a definite connection between the Epistle, Gospel and the *dies qua talis*, but also automatically establishes a systematic course of instruction for the whole year of some sort such as the Church must have intended when she first prescribed those extracts for our consideration in such definite form and sequence on the days to which they are respectively appointed.

There is here certainly a wide field for most interesting study and research, which deserves far more attention than it seems to have hitherto received. It is surely a poor compliment to Pope Damasus, to St Jerome, and to the Church herself to neglect or despise what was evidently intended to be a rich source of spiritual profit and instruction; and to count for so little the wonderful knowledge and skill with which that great saint and doctor endeavoured to give concrete expression to the ideas of our holy mother the Church by thus consecrating them in such definite articulated shape, imperishable artistic form, and beautiful spiritual significance.

Hence when Father John began to advert to the prospects of a rich harvest from his future labours, one of his greatest sources of encouragement was the fact that he would no longer experience much difficulty in the selection of suitable subjects for his Sunday sermons, for he could at least foresee that they

were already fairly well fixed for him, and only needed diligent and systematic search for them as each occasion presented itself. Thus he did not become in the least confused or disconcerted at the extent of the materials before him, but was already engaged in coolly reducing to order and method those within his reach, in clearing and preparing the fields which lay before him.

CHAPTER XV

HOLY SCRIPTURE IN GENERAL

ONE of the chief reasons for the initial success of Father John was the fact that he was fortunately led by a happy coincidence of circumstances to select for his first effort what is the easiest form of preaching for both priest and people. A popular instruction such as he gave on the subject of holy water contains in itself the most natural, and therefore also the most scientific, method of treatment—a quite obvious introduction, a few statements of fact, simple explanations of terms and objects, and a relation of general and particular advantages of use which naturally led to some concrete and practical conclusions; whilst at the same time he held in his hand the Ritual and its translation—a kind of guarantee of safety which inspired the most perfect confidence, and which, indeed removed by its very presence all consciousness of any danger and all risks of failure. The explanation of the Epistle and Gospel was slightly more difficult in form, or rather it required perhaps a little more thought, but nevertheless was quite easy under the circumstances on that occasion.

As perhaps some would not care to attempt in the very beginning that co-ordination of the Epistle and Gospel to which reference has been made, there is still the simple explanation of each taken separately, which only requires a careful reading, the help of a good commentary and the exertion of a little energy

perhaps in briefly dipping into a Bible dictionary for references or explanations. And this is not only one of the simplest but also one of the most valuable of all forms of preaching.

"Those whose duty it is to handle Catholic doctrine before the learned or the unlearned," says Pope Leo XIII in his famous Encyclical on the study of holy Scripture, *Providentissimus Deus*, "will nowhere find more ample matter, or more abundant exhortation, whether on the subject of God, the supreme Good and the all-perfect Being, or the works which display his glory and his love. Nowhere is there anything more full or more expressive on the subject of the Saviour of the world than is to be found in the whole range of the Bible. As St Jerome says, 'to be ignorant of the Scripture is not to know Christ.' In its pages his image stands out living and breathing; diffusing everywhere consolation in trouble, encouragement to virtue, and attraction to the love of God. And as to the Church, her institutions, her nature, her office and her gifts, we find in holy Scripture so many references and so many ready and convincing arguments that, as St Jerome again most truly says, 'a man well grounded in the testimonies of the Scripture is the bulwark of the Church.' And if we come to morality and discipline, an apostolic man finds in the sacred writings abundant and excellent assistance; most holy precepts, gentle and strong exhortation, splendid examples of every virtue, and finally the promise of eternal reward and the threat of eternal punishment, uttered in terms of solemn import, in God's own name and in God's own words."

The same Supreme Pontiff was always most anxious that preachers should more frequently engage in the

simple explanation of the holy Scriptures rather than preach fine sermons. So he forcibly reminds us that the Church "has strictly commanded that her children shall be fed with the saving words of the Gospel at least on Sundays and solemn feasts"; and expresses his "wish and fervent desire to see an increase in the number of the approved and persevering labourers in the cause of holy Scripture; and more especially that those whom divine grace has called to holy orders should, day by day, as their state demands, display greater diligence and industry in reading, meditating and explaining it." "Those who infuse into their efforts," he continues, "the spirit and strength of the Word of God speak 'not in word only, but in power also, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much fulness' (1 Thess. i, 5). Hence those preachers are foolish and improvident who, in speaking of religion and proclaiming the things of God, use no words but those of human science and human prudence, trusting to their own reasonings rather than to those of God. Their discourses may be brilliant and fine, but they must be feeble and they must be cold, for they are without the fire of the utterance of God (Jer. xxiii, 29) and they must fall far short of that mighty power which the speech of God possesses: 'for the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit' (Heb. iv, 12)."

It must be remarked that the holy Father does not by any means confine his advice on the study of the sacred Scriptures in general to their use as a mere remote preparation for preaching, or as a practical and valuable help in argument or illustration, but

distinctly says that we should explain them immediately to the people in as simple a manner as possible. As a proof of the advantages of this procedure, he quotes the example of our divine Master himself, and of his apostles, who so faithfully followed it, making special reference to the practice of St Paul. "Let all, therefore," he says, "and especially the novices of the ecclesiastical army, understand how deeply the sacred books should be esteemed, and with what great eagerness and reverence they should approach this great arsenal of heavenly arms." And again: "The efforts and arts of the enemy are chiefly directed against the more ignorant masses of the people. They diffuse their deadly poison by means of books, pamphlets and newspapers; they spread it by addresses and conversation; they are found everywhere." And so he advises us that in our own study and explanation of the sacred writings, "whilst weighing the meaning of words, the connection of ideas, the parallelism of passages, and the like . . . this should be done with caution," so as not "to overload the mind with a mass of information that will be rather a hindrance than a help."

Every preacher should possess a Concordance to the Scriptures. Very often he may remember some text or reference in an indefinite or hazy manner, but cannot quote or place it exactly. Frequently, too, a preacher takes a text from some book or sermon in which it has been incorrectly quoted, or in which it is quoted in *oratio obliqua,* or only substantially. The result is that a corrupt and altogether inaccurate version is ultimately substituted. According to Pope Leo XIII, "the Council of Trent decreed that 'in public lectures, disputations, preaching, and exposi-

tion,' the Vulgate is the 'authentic' version; and this is the existing custom of the Church."

Another advantage of the constant use of a Concordance is that we often come across allied texts in the course of our search which may prove more valuable for our purpose than that for which we are looking, as well as others which strike us by their own force or beauty and thus become familiar to us.

Priests not infrequently have derived their knowledge of holy Scripture, such as it may be, from mere bits and scraps that have come under their notice from time to time either in listening to sermons, or in their search for matter for sermons of their own. Many have never read even the New Testament right through consistently as a whole; some perhaps not even a single Gospel, or the Acts of the Apostles in like manner. They have become so familiar with the Epistles and Gospels of the Sundays that they sometimes imagine they have read the whole Bible. Others are always promising themselves to devote more time and attention to sacred Scripture generally, and they resolve to read a portion every day. But their resolution generally ends in nothing beyond the lifeless, uninteresting, aimless and unprofitable perusal of a few chapters of Genesis. We must adopt some immediately useful, concrete, definite and practical system of study—not necessarily any very deep, difficult or extended research, nor any very profound thought; yet not any mere desultory reading, or generic attention either, but rather the live study that we should, for instance, devote to some particular portion in preparing for, say, a class examination. We have no regular master or professor to "keep us up to the

mark." But we have in our own congregation a body to teach, a class of students eager to learn, and thus an object which will help to direct, control and encourage us to study in a live and practical way.

Where, then, shall we begin? We have already seen that we might very profitably begin on the Epistle, or the Gospel, or both combined, or rather correlated. But there are any amount of other most interesting extracts as well as these, which would, perhaps, be even more simple, such as the remaining parables or miracles, or discourses of Christ, not all of which are contained in the Epistles and Gospels of the Sundays. A complete list of these will be found in the Appendix, with the place of each clearly indicated.

It would be a much more difficult matter for a young priest to prepare, for instance, a sermon on some general subject such as prayer. This is a very wide subject, upon which whole volumes have been written, and he is confused by the very fact that there is such a large amount of information available. We have seen a priest set out to prepare such a sermon by surrounding himself with a pile of books, in which any possible reference to the subject might lurk, but which even St Thomas himself could not possibly digest during the time at his disposal. The result was that after a few hours of perspiring labour the poor preacher was not only far away from any definite thoughts on the subject, but even those he naturally set out with had become so confused and overloaded that he had to give up in despair. He reminded us very much of one who would walk in narrow alleys and byways in order to get a "bird's-eye view" of a great city. "Although the aeroplane has become a

familiar object in the sky," says a recent article, "the average person has no conception of the interesting panorama which a flight discloses. The flying man is able to see things very much as they are, while the individual travelling in tram or train gets perhaps a very wrong impression. His view is circumscribed by the narrow boundaries of a street or cutting." So the preacher should at first rise in his own thoughts and endeavour to get a "bird's-eye view" of his subject. He may then descend and take a clearer view of details. Then is the time to consult books on some special point or method of treatment. "Mallet, I believe," said Dr. Johnson, "never wrote a single line of his projected Life of the Duke of Marlborough. He groped for materials, and thought of it till he had exhausted his mind. Thus it sometimes happens that men entangle themselves in their own schemes."

But until the young priest achieves greater skill in the selection and arrangement of such materials as he may discover in such flights, would it not be easier for him to take as it were a smaller section, as, for instance, the parable of the unjust judge (Luke xviii), and explain the force and meaning of the lesson which it teaches—that of the fruits of *perseverance in prayer*. The chapter in which this parable is found begins with the very words of our divine Master himself on the subject: "We ought always to pray, and not to faint." And then the story is related in the usual simple style, to be followed by another, that of the Pharisee and the publican, which illustrates, among other things, some of the conditions of prayer and the results of efficacious prayer. The latter parable, however, has another meaning, which is made evident by the parable of the two sons (Matt. xxi, 28-32), and

followed by that of the vineyard (*Ibid.* 33-44). Thus the study and explanation of one leads to the study and explanation of another. And if such a method be pursued consistently for any length of time it will take very little time for the *immediate* preparation of each sermon, whilst we shall at the same time be laying up a store to serve as most useful *remote* preparation for many others. We shall find, too, that we are developing a taste for the study of holy Scripture as well as a wonderful skill in explaining it to the people. Some may think it more artistic and more original to depart from what they are pleased to call the "obvious" sense of such passages. But it is their very "obviousness" that makes them really beautiful and useful, as Christ intended.

The Old Testament does not as a rule form the subject-matter of explanation from the pulpit. It is even more neglected than the New Testament in general, as apart from the Epistles and Gospels. It is, of course, a very wide sphere taken as a whole. But what a number of simple *outstanding* stories, incidents, and lessons it presents to the preacher! From the story of creation to that of the Machabees, it offers a most striking series of dramatic and entertaining incidents which are replete with important lessons, and the mere recital of which, apart even from any explanation or comment of the preacher, would carry great advantages. Take, for example, the story of Tobias, of Judith, of Esther, or of Job, and see what a wealth of useful matter each of itself contains.

Hence Pope Leo XIII concludes: "Those who have a right to speak are agreed that there is in the holy Scriptures an eloquence that is wonderfully varied and rich and worthy of great themes. This

St Augustine thoroughly understood and has abundantly set forth. This, also, is confirmed by the best preachers of all ages, who have gratefully acknowledged that they owed their repute chiefly to the assiduous use of the Bible, and to devout meditation on its pages."

CHAPTER XVI

SERMONS ON OUR BLESSED LADY

BY following the method of simple explanation of some Catholic doctrine, practice, or ceremony, or of such definite passages of Holy Scripture as have already been referred to, especially of the Epistles and Gospels of the Sundays and the principal feasts, the young priest will not only have the advantage of beginning his career in the pulpit with courage and confidence, but will also, as it were automatically, begin at once to discharge the pastoral duty of giving to the people an orderly and consecutive course of Catholic teaching. He will also at the same time be carrying out not only the scientific principles on which sermons are technically constructed, but also such advice as St Alphonsus, for example, gives in his "Instructions to Preachers" as to the materials of which they ought to be composed.

"With regard to the subject-matter of sermons," says this great saint and doctor, "those subjects should be selected which move most powerfully to detest sin and to love God; whence the preacher should often speak of the last things—of death, of judgement, of hell, of heaven and of eternity . . . of the love which Jesus Christ bears towards us, of the love which we should bear towards Jesus Christ, and of the confidence we should have in his mercy."

When we read such pronouncements we are sometimes inclined to think the task to be extremely great

and difficult because we try as it were to *envisage* it all at once, regarding the apparently formidable list as a concrete whole to be immediately and *in toto* put into practice. Whereas if we try to regard each subject or sermon by itself, and let our motto be "One step enough for me," thus applying to the present case what our divine Master himself advises in dealing with other matters: "Be not therefore solicitous for to-morrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof" (Matt. vi, 34), we shall find that each sermon will bring its own help and encouragement with it, as well as sufficient and suitable matter for the main points of our discourse. But to imagine that because we need not in this case "be solicitous for to-morrow" we can afford to be careless for to-day also is as foolish as to imagine that the advice of Christ to his apostles: "Be not thoughtful beforehand what you shall speak" (Mark xiii, 11) literally applies to the priest in the pulpit as it applied to the apostles "delivered up to councils." The priest who would thoughtlessly depend upon such extraordinary help from heaven as the inspired apostles might expect in those circumstances would indeed be guilty of *tentatio Dei* akin to that of Satan himself when he said to Christ: "Command that these stones be made bread" (Matt. iv, 3).

It is only natural that when a student begins the study of sacred eloquence, and sees spread before him the amazing multitude, extent and variety of the materials which must claim his special individual attention in the pulpit, he must feel as if the task would be quite beyond his powers of energy and perseverance. We must not, then, regard the whole commissariat but rather the single and separate *ration;*

while the ground to be covered may be very extensive, our daily task will be light if regularly attempted.

So, when St Alphonsus continues: "In like manner the preacher should often speak of the confidence which we should have in the intercession of the mother of God," the proposition may seem to be a difficult one. Just as in the case of a wide subject such as prayer, it would require some pains at least to select appropriate materials for a few sermons on devotion to Mary in general; and the young priest, having succeeded in composing one or two discourses on the subject, may be inclined to imagine, perhaps, that he has exhausted the subject as far as he is concerned with regard to future efforts. He may indeed have gone over, or rather skimmed over, all the ground in connection with his theme, but that does not by any means signify that he has exhausted it. Let him, then, approach the matter by easy and successive stages, as we have endeavoured in general to explain, and deal with each point or aspect in more extreme detail. Then he will find that he has not only sufficient material at hand for each occasion as it presents itself, but that fresh fields and new views are continually opening up before him, each presenting an opportunity for treatment after the method of simple explanation which has been recommended in dealing with rites and ceremonies and other subjects of concrete fact or circumstance, as well as with definite passages or selections from holy Scripture, such as the parables or the miracles of Christ, or the short histories such as those of Ruth, Tobias, Judith, Esther, Job, Daniel, Jonas and the Machabees.

Refer to the Index of Feasts at the end of the Breviary. A full list will be found in a *Horæ Diurnæ*.

This will be found to contain about thirty feasts of our blessed Lady, arranged, of course, in alphabetical order. Taking them as we find them, the first is the Annunciation. Now what could be more simple than to explain the origin and meaning of this feast by relating the events which led up to it, the circumstances connected with it, and the benefits which flowed from it—the promise of the Redeemer, the visit of the angel, the conversation between Mary and the august messenger from God, her wonder, her humility, her questions, and her final consent, the actual consummation of the sacred mystery of the incarnation, and the wonderful dignity and privileges which accrued to the holy virgin as true mother of God on account of it. An explanation of the *Angelus* and the indulgences attached to its devout recital would naturally lead to the concrete and practical recommendation of the frequent use of this beautiful prayer.

The next feast in the list is the apparition of our Lady at Lourdes, and there is no need to say that this would form a most interesting and instructive discourse after the same simple method. And so on through the entire calendar, taking each feast by itself, and reading up with a view to gather information of each alone.

It will be found, perhaps, that at first sight some of the feasts present a rather general or indefinite aspect, such as the Patronage, our Lady of Grace, our Lady of Prodigies, for example; and that others have a less familiar appearance and a more confined outlook, such as those of our Lady Mother of the Divine Shepherd, our Lady of Consolation, our Lady of the Snows. But if we examine each by itself we are sure to find

that it is not so, but that ample material for a simple and interesting explanation of the origin and meaning of each, together with the special lesson to be learned from it, is easily available.

There is nothing which interests the people so much as to have things explained to them, especially familiar things such as they constantly use and reverence, and which are to them of such infinite and eternal importance. Thus they will always be glad to hear all they can about the history of the famous miraculous pictures, the medals, scapulars, beads and statues, which so forcibly remind us of our blessed Lady's dignity, power and privileges, and so abundantly prove her maternal care, love and compassion for her devoted children. Information on all subjects is easily available and will be naturally and pleasurably sought for under each particular feast as it occurs, whether we take the list in order, or as the feasts actually occur on their respective dates.

The very fact that the Church prescribes the official celebration of the praises of our Lady on so many occasions ought in itself to be sufficient proof of what she would willingly accomplish in favour of our dear mother Mary. The priest who would aspire to be a useful preacher should therefore ask our blessed Lady in fervent prayer for the gift of a deep, solid and lasting devotion to her interests, which are those of her own divine Son. He will then be not only able but anxious to spread the knowledge and love of Jesus and Mary, for his own soul will be full of it, and his lips will speak out of the abundance of his intimate and personal heart's love. As long as he makes it clear that all Mary's power of mediation is that of grace obtained through her prayers; and as

long as he does not claim that because God *will not* grant his graces without Mary's intercession, he *cannot*, he need not be afraid of being accused of exaggeration; and as long as he applies to Mary only those words which the Church herself addresses to her, such as "Mother of Divine Grace," "Cause of our Joy," "Gate of Heaven," "Refuge of Sinners," "Our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope," he need not be afraid of being accused of hyperbole by such cold-hearted theologians as those who accused St Alphonsus himself of both. "They," says the saint and doctor, "show great unwillingness to accord to her the glory which a St Germanus, a St Anselm, a St John Damascene, a St Bonaventure, a St Antonine, a St Bernardine of Siena, the venerable abbot of Celles and so many other divines have not scrupled to give her," which is, he continues, "a mark of little devotion to the mother of God." The language of love is not cold, stiff, dry and formal, and the language of the Church herself when speaking of Mary is anything but this. Every priest should be familiar with the "Glories of Mary." In its pages he will find not only the correct doctrine of the Church but also the ardent expression of those sentiments of burning love with which the holy soul of St Alphonsus was filled for Jesus and his holy Mother.

CHAPTER XVII

CATECHETICAL INSTRUCTIONS

IT is generally agreed that one of the most difficult forms of preaching is the catechetical instruction. Catechism in general is a form of simple instruction on any subject by means of question and answer. The origin of the practice of this form of religious instruction is conveyed in the literal meaning of the word itself—"teaching by voice (sound)"—which signified the oral instruction given to the early Christian converts, as it was forbidden by the "Discipline of the Secret" to convey in writing anything concerning the sacred mysteries.

Abstracting from the great broad question as to the essential nature of a catechism of Christian doctrine —whether it should be not only theologically but philosophically accurate, and on what particular plan or system it should be arranged—it will be the duty of the priest to explain in plain and simple language such catechism as is actually in the hands of the children he is instructing.

There are catechisms indeed which, as an English authority says, contain "some definitions made up of a number of ideas of such a hard metaphysical cast as to be wholly impervious to the ordinary mind, to say nothing of the child-mind." And the difficulty of the catechetical instruction in general lies in the necessity for plain and simple language in explanation of Christian doctrine; language so plain and simple that even a child could not fail to understand it. We do not, therefore, deal here with the question

of the construction or composition of a catechism which will not need translation or paraphrase before we can even begin to explain its meaning to children, although priests are often faced with this double disadvantage. But as the subject-matter of our catechetical instructions must as a rule be dealt with not only according to the arrangement of the catechism actually in use, but must also be built upon its words as they appear before us, it will be necessary for us to be all the more careful that our own language shall not be even more theological, more philosophical, or more learned, lest we make confusion worse confounded in the minds of the children to whom we are trying to make both the language and the doctrine clearer. "Sermonese" is bad enough for ordinary people, but children can make no sense or meaning out of it at all. A priest therefore sometimes finds himself in the position of the schoolmaster who went to Holland to teach English only to find that he had first to learn Dutch himself. "Many," says Butler, "put on in their thoughts and expressions a scholastic garb, which they cannot lay aside, so that their minds may be said to be cast in Gothic moulds" (*Life of St Francis Borgia*).

It is a mistake to suppose, too, that only children need be catechised. It is the express wish of the Church that the pastor should so instruct his entire flock. "*Sermo ad populum in quo consistit?*" asks Berardi. "*In duobus,*" he answers, "*nempe* 1, *in explicatione catechismi;* 2, *in explicatione Evangelii.*" And he goes on to explain: "... *satisfacere posset* 1, *si, dum rite explicat catechismum pueris, populus quoque adesset, eique pro re nata monita specialia dirigeret*" (*Theologia Pastoralis*, 108).

Hence, notwithstanding the invaluable religious training given by the good nuns and brothers of our religious orders, it by no means follows that the pastor is entirely relieved of his obligation towards the children of his parish. What, then, he is to do, and how he is to proceed, is a matter which must depend upon local conditions and circumstances. But in most circumstances the priest can easily arrange that at least on some Sundays a sufficient number of children shall assemble in order that he may address them in particular, and the congregation in general through them, on the subject-matter of the catechism in use.

Having previously set the children a definite lesson to prepare, and their teachers or parents having paid particular attention during the week to the teaching of at least the words, all should be prepared to answer the questions put to them by the priest from the pulpit. This system will have the triple advantage of causing the parents to see that their children do their best during the week; of giving the whole congregation the benefit of hearing the questions, the answers, and whatever explanation may be given; and of enabling the priest to put the truths of our holy faith in plain and simple style before all; while at the same time he will be provided with a kind of natural safeguard against failure by the consciousness of the fact that even if he cannot at first say much to the purpose, he will at least have the advantage of saying as little as he may and will at any rate have "heard the catechism" of the children. After some practice he will overcome that feeling akin to shyness which so often takes hold of some when faced with the ordeal of addressing children in their own language, and he

will accordingly soon find plenty to say by way of explanation.

The children, too, will soon become accustomed to the practice. And their parents will be so anxious to see them acquit themselves worthily before the congregation that there will be little need to impress upon them their obligation of seeing that those entrusted to their charge should learn the Christian doctrine. Soon regular family "conferences" will be held throughout the parish as to what answers shall be made to likely questions on the Sunday.

For safety, however, it would be well to have a few children specially prepared during the week either by the teacher or by the priest himself, who would be called upon first to answer formal questions. Stray questions could then be put among the other children and followed up as long as there was no danger of disgraceful failure, for of course it would never do to expose the ignorance or stupidity of any child so publicly, though all should feel themselves exposed to be questioned. A little prudence and tact here will prevent any resentment on the part of the parents at their children's failure; so that while the reward of merit most desired and appreciated both by parents and children will be, so to speak, the display of endurance under cross-examination, its loss by quick passage to another will not have the appearance, though it will have the effect, of a mild but condign penalty.

From the very necessity of the case, the first aim of the catechist should be to use none but the plainest and simplest language possible. He should be careful, therefore, to avoid all long words, as well as all long sentences. To this end he might, perhaps, as

an experiment, or as a test, write out a few statements previously made, or intended to be made, and then endeavour to remove all words of more than two syllables from them. This will be found to necessitate the breaking up or re-casting of many of his sentences. Thus, for instance, "We ought to be duly impressed with a deep sense of gratitude towards our omnipotent Creator" would be much better understood by everybody if it were expressed as, say, "We ought to be very thankful to Almighty God;" "a grievous transgression" will not convey as much to the child-mind as, say "a big sin"; and "They did not remain obedient to God" will be better expressed when translated into some such language as "They did not do what God told them," and so on.

But even when we become expert in the language of simple explanation we must be careful also to cultivate a simple style of questioning. This really depends not so much on the nature of our language as on the habit of thought necessary, for we may ask a very difficult question in very simple words. And herein we find perhaps the greatest difficulty, for we must not only accommodate our language to the child language but we must accommodate our mind to the child mind, which can grasp very little at a time, and even that is of the simplest "one-idea" nature.

Some have a peculiar gift or genius for such accommodation, and in this sense, accordingly, catechists are "born, not made." But all can attain a valuable degree of success by aiming at breaking up complex ideas as much as possible. Hence one broad question and answer in the catechism may often have to be explained by asking six or seven simple ones. Let us suppose, for instance, that we are explaining the

doctrine of the blessed Eucharist. Some such questions and answers as the following would be typical :—

Q. Did you ever see the blessed Sacrament?—*A*. Yes.
Q. When?—*A*. At Mass.
Q. Where?—*A*. On the altar.
Q. When?—*A*. At Mass.
Q. At the end of Mass?—*A*. No.
Q. At the beginning of Mass?—*A*. No.
Q. What part of the Mass?—*A*. At the middle.
Q. What is the blessed Sacrament?—*A*. The body of Christ.
Q. Where was it?—*A*. In the priest's hands.
Q. What was it like?—*A*. Bread.
Q. Was it bread?—*A*. No.
Q. Was it ever bread?—*A*. Yes.
Q. When?—*A*. Before Mass.
Q. At what part of the Mass was it no longer bread?—*A*. At the middle.
Q. What do you call that part of the Mass?—*A*. The Consecration.
Q. Was it bread after the Consecration?—*A*. No.
Q. Was it like bread?—*A*. Yes.
Q. Was it really bread then?—*A*. No.
Q. How is it that it was no longer bread?—*A*. The priest changed it.
Q. How did he change it?—*A*. By God's power.
Q. Who gave him that power?—*A*. Jesus Christ.
Q. When?—*A*. At the Last Supper.
Q. What did Jesus say when He was giving that power to priests?—*A*. (Here the child repeats the words of institution as found in the catechism); and so on.

It must not by any means be thought that this is given as a model to be followed, but only as an example of the large number of questions that will have to be asked, most of them depending on the answer which the child makes to each. Even if the priest did nothing else but ask such questions, adding no formal explanation of his own, he will be able to direct the minds of the children into the proper channels and thus draw out their ideas and make them think and reason, and thus learn, according to their lights.

After some practical experience of such a method with children, the priest will have become more confident of his ability to continue the process of explanation. He will gradually lose that peculiar self-consciousness which takes hold of some in such circumstances, and he will, too, strange to say, "know his catechism" much better himself, and consequently will be much better supplied with the necessary materials for the simple instruction of the people in general.

But the greatest essential for success here is that true simplicity of heart which is one of the chief fruits of humility. The truly holy man has the spirit and the mind of Christ and will already have become a little child himself in the sense explained and required by our divine Master when he said: "Amen I say to you, unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii, 3). This means that he will not only be more capable of accommodating himself to the child-mind but he will have become a kindred spirit with "the little ones of Christ," and will gain their love and confidence by his mildness, affability,

cheerfulness and clemency. When children fear their teacher their little minds are more fully occupied about the probable outcome of his anger or resentment than in attending to what he is trying to teach them. So that when the priest is feared rather than loved by them he is met with a double disadvantage. Besides, the truly holy priest will be gifted with a certain spiritual insight, and will instinctively discover new and ingenious ways and means of explaining things to the children and to the people such as the mere worldly wise could never discover—or even imitate successfully. His mind will have a supernatural instinct of accommodation to the child-mind which will render his teaching not only spiritually fruitful but even technically successful, for, as our divine Master himself has said, addressing his heavenly Father: "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones" (Matt. xi, 25). Our great master and model then, in this as in everything, is Jesus himself, who says: "Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart" (*Ibid.* xi, 29).

CHAPTER XVIII

CONSECUTIVE COURSES OF PREACHING

SERIES of sermons or instructions such as those already mentioned would form suitable courses of religious instruction. But, with the exception of the series of the Epistles and Gospels of the Sundays and principal feasts of the year, they might not of themselves constitute an adequate system for unfolding all the essentials of Christian doctrine according to any ordered method. But fortunately the Church herself has not only supplied us with a well-ordered and definite system with that end in view, but she has also provided abundant material for our discourses, according to the plan which she sets forth in the Catechism of the Council of Trent.

In this work there are four main divisions of Christian doctrine, dealing respectively with the Apostles' Creed, the Sacraments, the Decalogue, and prayer; and the matter is sufficient to supply the preacher with a solid instruction of about twenty minutes or more every week for about six years.

As it is considered by good authorities of the present day that the average modern congregation cannot keep its attention fixed to advantage for longer than about twenty minutes, we mention this period as the average length which the ordinary sermon ought not as a general rule to exceed. But simple instructions do not demand such concentration of attention as the ordinary sermon and are as a rule more interesting to the people than any other form of

preaching, apart from special circumstances. Hence simple instructions may be allowed sometimes to exceed this period, but should as a rule never be prolonged much beyond the half-hour.

When a speaker is interested in his subject he is wonderfully unconscious of the flight of time. Hence it has been said that "while there is a saint in the pulpit there are often martyrs in the pew." We should therefore adopt some means of time measurement, such as the now obsolete but convenient "hour-glass." In some churches the preacher is facing a big clock. But this is of no practical use to one who would wish to regulate his discourse by it. And the same is true of a watch which is merely used to show the actual correct time. Suppose, for instance, that we began to preach at eleven minutes to eight, and wished to continue for about twenty minutes, it would require some calculation to advert to the time at which we should conclude. But even more difficult problems might present themselves, as, for instance, if we began at seventeen minutes past the hour and wished to speak for twenty-five minutes. Even if we adverted to the answer straightway, we should need to take note of it, keep it well in mind, and advert again when the time arrived. But if we wish to speak for any period, and set our watch at that distance before the hour, when the minute hand points to the hour we know at a single glance that our time is up; and we know all the time, too, how we are progressing, almost without any advertence whatever, so that we may "cut out" our discourse in its due proportions to an exact nicety. It is just as practical and just as simple a method as that which we adopt when we set out to write, say, six or seven pages, or so many hundred

words, on a given subject, and much easier to accomplish with a fine finish. Some such system would be much more necessary when preaching a course of instructions such as that of the Catechism of the Council of Trent, for we should often require to know whether it would be worth while to begin a new section or division, or spend a little longer in concluding the portion being dealt with.

Having now become familiar with the practice of preaching we may set out to deliver at certain seasons, such as in Advent or in Lent, or on special occasions such as Novenas, short series of sermons on suitable subjects. We shall have acquired the art of being able to stand back as it were from any subject we attack, and first get a good grasp of its general aspect before we approach nearer to observe more closely and fill in the necessary details. It is for the latter purpose we should read up the subject and not for the former. If the subject is so utterly unfamiliar to us that we have no such general view of it, it simply means that we have no view at all, and had accordingly better postpone our "treatment" of it until we know something about it.

Hence we have the whole range of Christian doctrine at our disposal for series of consecutive discourses. Such, for instance, would be—as apart from the course of the Catechism of the Council of Trent—the life of Christ, of our blessed Lady, of St Joseph and other saints, apostles and martyrs, especially particular patrons; sermons on the passion; the seven words of Jesus on the cross; the seven dolours of Mary; the seven sorrows and seven joys of St Joseph; the mysteries of the Rosary; the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; the seven deadly sins; the stations of the

cross, and such series as have already been mentioned, as the discourses, parables, and miracles of Jesus, sermons on the feasts of our Lady, and so on almost without end, for the labours of one short life would be totally inadequate to announce and explain "what things God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii, 9).

Whilst by no means attempting to prescribe what special courses of sermons or instructions a priest should engage in, beyond those recommended or prescribed by the Church, we must remark that it is a pity there should be such comparatively little preaching of devotion to the Holy Ghost. Priests generally confine their preaching in this direction to perhaps an instruction on confirmation and a sermon on the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost.

"Perchance there are still to be found, even nowadays," says Pope Leo XIII in his Encyclical on the holy Spirit, "some who, if asked, as were those of old by St Paul the apostle, whether they have received the Holy Ghost, might answer in like manner: *We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost* (Acts xix, 2). At least there are certainly many who are very deficient in their knowledge of him. They frequently use his name in their religious practices, but their faith is involved in much darkness. Wherefore all preachers and those having care of souls should remember that it is their duty to instruct their people more diligently and more fully about the Holy Ghost—avoiding, however, difficult and subtle controversies, and eschewing the dangerous folly of those who rashly endeavour to pry into divine mysteries. What should be chiefly dwelt upon and

clearly explained is the multitude and greatness of the benefits which have been bestowed, and are constantly bestowed, upon us by this divine Giver, so that errors and ignorance concerning matters of such moment may be entirely dispelled, as unworthy of 'the children of light.'"

The holy Spirit of truth and love is the very enlightenment and inspiration of the preacher, as well as the Paraclete, the comforter of all Christians, the sanctifier of the Church in general, and of each individual soul in particular. Hence it is upon the special grace and inspiration of the Holy Ghost that the priest in the pulpit depends for the authority and value of the message which he conveys; for the divine grace and efficacy which it bears; and for the results which it produces in the hearts and souls of the hearers, causing them both to will and to accomplish the holy will of God (*cf.* Phil. ii, 13).

The preacher should therefore before all others be animated by a very special devotion to the holy Spirit of light and grace and love. The Third Person of the blessed Trinity should, as it were, be his special refuge in the pulpit as Jesus is upon the altar. In the ministry of preaching the holy Spirit discharges the special office which Jesus promised on his behalf when he promised to send him to teach and guide his Church and its teachers, and to sanctify the labours of the dispensers of his sacred mysteries—"When he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will teach you all truth" (John xvi, 13); and again: "You shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost

part of the earth" (Acts i, 8). What priest can ever forget that most solemn and most beautiful invocation of the Holy Ghost at his ordination—the *"Veni Creator Spiritus"*?

If every priest had such special devotion to the Holy Ghost as his very ministry would lead us to expect, he would be most anxious to preach it and to spread it amongst the faithful. And the holy Spirit himself would help, encourage, bless and reward him in his work of preaching generally. No preacher should ever begin a sermon or an instruction without having previously recited at least the *"Veni Sancte Spiritus,"* if possible in the presence of the blessed Sacrament, in order to obtain the fire of divine love and the light of the holy Spirit. *"Nihil impossibile amori,"* says St Francis de Sales, *"Dominus Petrum interrogat, non doctusne es, an eloquens ut ei dicat, Pasce oves meas; sed Amas me? Bene amare sufficit ut bene dicas."*

Success in the pulpit, then, will practically mean for the regular and constant preacher regular and constant study of theology and sacred Scripture, as well as continual prayer and meditation on the divine truths generally, not merely with subject-matter for preaching in view but, which is far more important, with the immediate and practical object of his own personal sanctification. "Neglect not the grace that is in thee," says St Paul, "which was given thee by prophecy, with the imposition of the hands of the priesthood. Meditate upon these things, be wholly in these things: that thy profiting may be manifest to all. Take heed to thyself and to doctrine: be earnest in them. For in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. iv, 14-16).

In the course of our reading and meditation we shall meet with many new ideas and fresh forms of thought. New subjects and other aspects will present themselves, and our power of eloquence will increase with our knowledge and practice—*crescit eundo*. And the results of our study will be what has been so well said of books in general: "Some are edifices to stand as they are built, some are hewn stones ready to form a part of future edifices, some are quarries from which stones are to be split for shaping and after use."

Even the ordinary priest will not be long engaged in the exposition of Catholic doctrine when he will find it not only useful but perhaps necessary to pay some attention to the defence of Catholic principles by answering the current objections of scoffers and unbelievers. This may seem at first sight to be the special work of special preachers and writers, but it is nevertheless a matter in which every priest may quite easily and profitably take a hand. "In our opinion," says Bishop Messmer, "a systematic course of short essays in the form of plain exposition or of apologetic discussion upon the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and the special claims of the Catholic Church, her achievements in every field of civilization (universal charity, individual and social morality, education and science, etc.) will of itself furnish an almost endless programme at once thoroughly instructive and truly delightful."

Hence the trouble of the average priest will be not so much the search for subjects and materials for sermons as patience and perseverance in delivering them. This he will best obtain by constant and persevering prayer to the holy Spirit. "Let us go there-

fore with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid" (Heb. iv, 16). Then will "your speech be always in grace seasoned with salt: that you may know how you ought to answer every man" (Col. iv, 6).

CHAPTER XIX

OCCASIONAL SERMONS

AN occasional sermon, as the name indicates, is a formal discourse suitable for some particular occasion of more or less importance, such as the laying of a corner-stone, the opening of a school, a convent, or a church, the funeral of a prelate, the panegyric of a saint, a jubilee, the reception or profession of religious, the ordination of a priest, the consecration of a bishop, and the like.

As a general rule special preachers are invited or appointed for such occasions. At the same time, however, any priest may be called upon, even in his own parish or district to deliver a sermon suited to some special occasion or set of circumstances, such as one of those mentioned. And every priest ought to be able to acquit himself with ease and with success, with pleasure and with profit to all concerned, for, notwithstanding anything to the contrary, no occasion is so great as to be above the plain and simple preaching of the gospel, and no circumstances however important can excuse a preacher from keeping to the spirit of the gospel and the mind which was in Christ Jesus (*cf.* Phil. ii, 5), who on all occasions was simple though sublime, and spoke to the great ones of the earth in language which even the least could understand.

At the same time an occasional sermon must from the very nature of the circumstances be a more formal, and generally even a more lengthy, discourse than

an ordinary sermon; but only in the sense that the subject is as it were approached more slowly and from a greater distance, dwelt upon more deliberately, and preserved more consistently in a certain unity of treatment or leading idea. This need not, however, interfere with its simplicity of language or of style; nor does it signify that any elaborate method of treatment should be pursued; but only that a more formal and set appearance should be given to it for the sake of dignified effect; that we should, as it were, stand further back from our subject in order to call greater attention to its present special importance in view of the particular occasion, as one would, for instance, in exhibiting, say, a collection of jewels, pictures, or precious stones, hesitate for a moment before disclosing some special one to notice in order to excite interest or gain effect by a few words of explanation of the rare character or unique history of the object, which would as a rule be produced only after the others had been shown.

Thus, suppose we were to preach the occasional sermon at the opening of a new church, we might select for our text and for our leading idea the words: "How terrible is this place! This is no other but the house of God, and the gate of heaven" (Gen. xxviii, 17). We should then naturally explain the circumstances in which those words were originally used, calling attention to the fact that up to the time of Moses the Israelites had no fixed place of worship or properly constituted priesthood; how till that time the patriarchs, and later on the heads of families, had offered sacrifice now in one place and now in another, until at length Moses was ordered to build the Tabernacle: "And they shall make me a sanctuary,

and I will dwell in the midst of them: according to all the likeness of the Tabernacle which I will show thee, and of all the vessels for the service thereof" (Exod. xxv, 8, 9). We could then briefly refer to the construction of the Tabernacle, its use and its contents, afterwards passing on to the building, consecration and dedication of Solomon's Temple and the wonders that happened on the occasion at the conclusion of the king's prayer, as related in the second chapter of Paralipomenon. Then we could show how much greater than either the Tabernacle or the Temple was the present church, particularly on account of the celebration of holy Mass, the real presence of Jesus Christ, and the dispensation of his sacred mysteries in it.

Then we could refer to the actual *occasion*, and show that as the building was so important on account of the august purposes for which it was intended, the Church was very careful to dedicate it in a very special manner to the service of Almighty God; explaining also its "Title" and its significance by the relation of Jacob's vision (Gen. xxviii); his setting up and anointing of the stone, thus coming to the words of our text and to the main idea of our special subject, as given above.

We could then conclude by showing the awe, reverence and devotion with which we should enter and conduct ourselves in such a holy place, the sentiments which should animate us while present in it, especially during the actual celebration of the sacred mysteries, making concrete and detailed reference to the many blessings we might hope to receive there in future, as we heard Mass, received the Sacraments, listened to the holy Word of God, and sent up our

sighs and prayers to the Most High, whose dwelling-place it has now become.

Finally we might point out the interest we should accordingly take in providing for its cost, adornment and upkeep, making some reference to the particular saint or holy mystery to which it has been dedicated; and praying for the special help and intercession of its holy patron, that it might be for all time to all in the parish a true "House of God and Gate of Heaven."

Thus this "Occasional Sermon" would in no way differ from an ordinary sermon or instruction on the use and significance of churches in general, except that on this occasion we, as it were, reserve the idea that the present church is greater than the ancient Tabernacle or the Temple until we have first shown how great and important the two latter were in view of their design and institution by Almighty God himself. So that in both the natural order of simple explanation is preserved; nor even in the occasional sermon is any new matter introduced except what naturally follows from the fact that this is a new church, now formally dedicated for future use, and under a special title.

Hence, no matter what the occasion may be, we may still follow the natural order of treatment, without any elaborate plan or high-flown sentiment, only that in addition to the matter of an ordinary instruction we must explain the present natural significance of the occasion, either by making it the special subject of our opening remarks, or by reserving it to the last, as in the example given. The latter order will, as a rule, be found the more effective, provided, however, our previous explanation leads up to it, or is at least

strengthened by it. Thus, for instance, if we were preaching a charity sermon we could simply state in the very beginning the special object of the collection about to be made; or we could first explain the law of charity in general, and then enforce its practical application in the assistance to be rendered to the poor and needy, and especially here and now in the present concrete instance, giving some details as to the nature of the fund or institution, the benefits to be derived by the recipients, and the present need for the practical assistance for which we are appealing.

Excellent matter will be found in nearly every sermon work which only requires special application to particular circumstances in a similar way in order to become formal "Occasional Sermons."

CHAPTER XX

SOURCES OF EFFICACY

ALTHOUGH it is after all comparatively easy for any zealous priest to "preach the word" and be "instant in season, out of season" by the delivery of at least valid discourses, it by no means follows that we should be satisfied with such a measure of success, for, as St Paul goes on to explain, "there shall be a time, when they will not endure sound doctrine; but, according to their own desires, they will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. iv, 3, 4). So he immediately adds to his advice on constant and regular preaching: "Reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine" (*Ibid.* iv, 2). And St Peter confirms this when he says: "There shall be among you lying teachers, who shall bring in sects of perdition, and deny the Lord who bought them" (2 Pet. ii, 1).

These prophecies have already been fulfilled, and the world is now overrun with false teachers who use every art and science upon which they can draw for the propagation of false doctrines, the overthrow of the Catholic Church, and even of Christianity itself and "the Lord who bought them."

It is the special duty of priests not only to oppose such error directly and immediately by argument or defence where necessary, but also to "speak the things that become sound doctrine" by constantly

and regularly instructing and admonishing the faithful so as to preserve them from the corruption of error, "keeping the salvation of the righteous, and protecting them that walk in simplicity. Keeping the paths of justice, and guarding the ways of saints" (Prov. ii, 7, 8). "You are the salt of the earth," said our divine Master, "but if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" (Matt. v, 13). According to St John Chrysostom, priests will be punished for neglect in this respect. "It is no excuse for a watchman to say: 'I heard not the trumpet: I saw not the enemy approach' (Ezech. xxxiii, 3), says Butler in his Life of the saint, "for he is appointed sentinel to watch and announce the danger to others. If a single soul perishes through his neglect, this will condemn him at the last day. In how great watchfulness must he live in order not to be infected with the contagion of the world, with which he is obliged to converse! With what zeal, vigilance and fervour is he bound to acquit himself of all his duties and functions! For priests are ambassadors of heaven, sent not to one city, but to the whole earth, with a strict charge never to cease scattering the divine seed, preaching and exhorting with so great diligence, that no sinner may be able to escape them."

Hence we must devote all our energy and zeal, all our knowledge and skill, all the eloquence we can command, and aim at all the improvement in the effective preaching of the holy Word of God which the means at our disposal may render possible. As it is generally the weak, the ignorant and the foolish who are scandalized by the preaching of false doctrine, it follows that our first duty is to preserve the faithful from the corruption of error by constantly

seasoning their minds and hearts with the salt of heavenly wisdom and the sound doctrine of the Living Word, "for the word of God is living and effectual, and more piercing than any two-edged sword; and reaching unto the division of the soul and the spirit, of the joints also and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. iv, 12). Hence our divine Master said: "Salt is good. But if the salt become unsavoury: wherewith will you season it? Have salt in you" (Mark ix, 49).

This previous duty of priests with regard to their own personal preparation and sanctification as fit ministers of the gospel is beautifully impressed upon us by St Peter, whose words may well be applied in the present instance to all who share in the care of souls, for he enumerates in regular order the chief sources of the efficacy of the personal efforts of the preacher towards improvement in the knowledge and practice of the duties of his sacred vocation, especially as regards improvement in sacred eloquence: "And you employing all care, minister in your faith, virtue: and in virtue, knowledge: and in knowledge, abstinence: and in abstinence, patience: and in patience, godliness: and in godliness, love of brotherhood: and in love of brotherhood, charity. For if these things be with you and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. i, 5-8).

If we had a strong spirit of faith in the power of the gospel, we should strain every effort, "employing all care" to overcome our natural defects and shortcomings, neglecting nothing that might improve our preaching and render it more and more efficient and fruitful. Love is the secret of persevering zeal. And

faith is the foundation of that charity which "never falleth away" (1 Cor. xiii, 8)—not a mere speculative faith by which we are convinced of the truth of the gospel precepts, for even the devils have such a faith: "Thou believest that there is one God. Thou dost well," says St. James, "the devils also believe and tremble" (James ii, 19); nor a mere weak and temporary faith such as that of him who "heareth the word, and immediately receiveth it with joy. Yet hath he not root in himself, but is only for a time: and when there ariseth tribulation and persecution because of the word, he is presently scandalized;" nor of him that "heareth the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke up the word, and he becometh fruitless" (Matt. xiii, 20-22); but a *fides informata* which influences the will and changes the heart and whole spring of action so that we are prepared to face all difficulties for the pure love of God and are enabled by his grace to conquer them. This is of course the gift of God and can be secured and strengthened only by prayer. "Lord, increase our faith" prayed the apostles, by which they meant that "faith that worketh by charity" (Gal. v, 6), and which afterwards enabled them to preach and teach the gospel with a burning desire to spread the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ in spite of persecution and suffering.

The first result of such firm and lively faith is of course perseverance in the practice of solid virtue. And if virtue is necessary from a purely natural point of view for success even in profane eloquence, is it not much more necessary for success in the preaching of the gospel? Indeed it was a maxim with the ancients: "*Non posse oratorem esse nisi virum*

bonum." When we know that a speaker is a man of true virtue we are inclined to consider his statements worthy of attention and consideration. Thus his cause is already partly won, for all are predisposed in his favour. But if we know an orator to be otherwise, his eloquence, however great, is mostly wasted by distrust of his professions and statements. It may entertain or amuse us, but it will not convince or convert us as long as we must regard his most serious attitudes as mere tricks of artistic sophistry. And if this be the case with profane orators, solid virtue is all the more necessary in the preacher! Nay, according to St. Bernard, "*Nugæ secularium sunt blasphemiæ clericorum.*" "*Quid dicitur?*" says St Francis de Sales, "*Quam illi tempore abundant! Ut non male deliciantur! Post hæc vade, et mortificationem predica: ridebitur predicator.*"

Virtue is also even naturally necessary for securing that knowledge which, above all others, the sacred orator must possess regarding the business of his special profession. The mind of any man who is not virtuous is ill disposed for study and contemplation, and his time is no less occupied than his brain in the pursuit of inordinate pleasures—"In virtue, knowledge: and in knowledge, abstinence." Even the pagan Quintilian says: "If the management of an estate, if anxious attention to domestic economy, a passion for hunting, or whole days given up to public places of amusement, consume so much time that is due to study, how much greater waste must be occasioned by licentious desires, avarice, or envy? Nothing is so much hurried and agitated, so contradictory to itself, or so violently torn and shattered by conflicting passions, as a bad heart. Amidst the dis-

tractions which it produces, what room is left for the cultivation of letters, or the pursuit of any honourable art? No more, assuredly, than there is for the growth of corn in a field that is overrun with thorns and brambles."

"Learning," says Butler, "is recommended by reason, authority, and the example of the saints, and next to virtue is doubtless the greatest improvement of the human mind. By it the nobleman is qualified for the superior position he holds among men, is made capable of directing himself and others, is drawn off from debauchery and idleness, possesses the art of filling most usefully and agreeably all his vacant hours, and acquires a relish for the acquirement of true rational knowledge, than which man can enjoy no greater or more noble, except those which piety and virtue infuse. By exercise and application the memory and other powers of the soul are perfected, the understanding is furnished with true ideas and a just way of thinking, and the judgement acquires true justice and taste. In a pastor of souls, and minister of religion, how essential the qualification of consummate skill in sacred learning is, it is needless to show, the infinite obligation of that charge making it manifest to all men. How grievous, then, is the crime of those who are engaged in this state, yet idly throw away the time they owe to the study of the sacred writings, to holy meditation, and application to the science of morality and the pulpit!" (*Life of St Peter Chrysologus*).

Not only does the practice of virtue afford time and inclination for the prosecution of the necessary study and the acquirement of the necessary knowledge, but it affords a perennial well-spring of pleasing thoughts,

happy expressions, and noble sentiments, not to speak at all of the pious supernatural inspirations with which the mind and soul of the holy priest must be ever filled to overflowing from his study and contemplation of heavenly things as revealed by divine truth. These results cannot be imitated. Such effects can never flow from mere pretended virtue. Besides, such dispositions and such lights and graces call forth a true brotherly love, a truly genuine Christian charity, refining the mind and softening the heart with the sensible qualities of sympathy and generosity, so that the preaching of the priest who possesses them is that which St Francis de Sales loved: "*Prædicationem amo, quæ amorem proximi magis quam indignationem redoleat; etiam ipsos erga sectarios, quos et magna compassione tractare oportet non blandiendo tamen, sed deplorando.*" And hence the same saint says: "*Bene amare sufficit ut bene dicas.*"

No wonder then St Peter says: "In godliness, love of brotherhood: and in love of brotherhood, charity. For if these things be with you and abound, they will make you to be neither empty nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is what lends that peculiar spiritual quality of *unction* to the simplest sermon of the holy priest, a quality which is not to be confused with the mere natural element of *expression* in good delivery. "How comes it now," asks Butler (*Life of St Bartholomew*) "that nowadays the apostolical labours of so many ministers of the divine word produce so little fruit? One great reason of this difference is their neglect to obtain of God a large share in the spirit of the apostles. Their success and the influence of their words upon the hearts of men depend not upon human prudence, eloquence,

and abilities; the principal instrument of God's grace in multiplying the fruit of his word in the hearts of men, is that spirit with which it is announced by those whom he honours with his ministry. Their sincere disinterestedness, humility, and overflowing zeal and charity give as it were a living voice to that divine faith and virtue which they preach; and those who take upon them this charge are doubly to prepare themselves for it by strenuously labouring to obtain of Christ this perfect spirit in the sanctification of their own souls not to profane their holy ministry, and destroy the work of God which is committed to their charge."

"He who desires to preach to others with fruit," says the same author (*Life of St Gall*), "must first preach to himself, treasuring up lessons of true piety in his own mind, imprinting deeply in his heart the sentiments of all virtues, and learning to practise first what he would afterwards teach others." And again (*Life of St Bernardin of Sienna*): "The great apostle of Andalusia, the venerable holy John d'Avila, being desired to lay down some rules for the art of preaching, answered, he knew no other *art* than the most ardent love of God and zeal for his honour. He used to say to young clergymen that one word spoken by a man of prayer would do more good and have a more powerful influence than all the most eloquent discourses; for it is only the language of the heart that speaks to the heart; and a life of mortification and prayer not only draws down the dew of the divine benediction upon the labours of the preacher, but it replenishes his soul with a spirit of humility, compunction, and all the virtues, and with an experimental knowledge and feeling sense of the great truths

which he delivers." "In all your actions," says the saint of whom he writes, "seek in the first place the kingdom of God and his glory; direct all you do purely to his honour; persevere in brotherly charity, and practise first all you desire to teach others. By this means the Holy Ghost will be your master, and will give you such wisdom and such a tongue that no adversary will be able to stand against you."

But far above and beyond all the influence of the overflowing zeal, natural gifts, and personal sanctity of the preacher there is the special power of the Holy Spirit, not only helping, sustaining and enlightening the sacred minister of the gospel, but preparing the souls of the hearers for the worthy and fruitful reception of the good seed, and imbuing the holy Word not only with that essential efficacy which must naturally distinguish the cause of divine truth itself, but with that extraordinary supernatural power which the official Word of God alone possesses for the production of marvellous results in the hearts and lives of men as well as in the world in general, especially as it issues living and effectual from the lips of its divinely appointed dispensers. Hence the official Word has the nature of a sacramental and is capable of producing effects not only *ex opere operantis* but even *quasi ex opere operato*, though *remote et mediate*, and not, as in the case of the Sacraments, *necessario*. "*Productio ex opere operantis*," says Schouppe, "*est sicut valor tabulæ depictæ, qui nempe inest tabulæ, non quia depicta est, sed quia bene depicta: productio vero ex opere operato est sicut valor regii chirographi, qui nempe ei inest non quia bene descriptum est, sed simpliciter quia scriptum*" (ii, 130). Hence St Paul says: "For Christ therefore we are ambas-

sadors, God as it were exhorting by us" (2 Cor. v, 20): and again: "We also give thanks to God without ceasing: because that when you had received of us the word of the hearing of God you received it not as the word of men, but (as it is indeed) the word of God who worketh in you that have believed" (1 Thess. ii, 13).

Well may the preacher exclaim, then, with the apostle: "To me, the least of all the saints, is given this grace, to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. And to enlighten all men, that they may see what is the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from eternity in God, who created all things: that the manifold wisdom of God may be made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places through the Church, according to the eternal purpose which he made, in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. . . . Now to him who is able to do all things more abundantly than we desire or understand, according to the power that worketh in us: to him be glory in the Church, and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, world without end. Amen." (Eph. iii, 8-21.)

PART III

THE SCIENCE AND ART OF DELIVERY

"Even things without life that give sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction of sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle? So likewise you, except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking into the air."—1 Cor. xiv, 7-9.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ART OF DELIVERY

ST PAUL makes it very clear that if the preacher be not easily heard and easily understood his work is useless to others—"Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of Christ" (Rom. x, 17); "he that prophesieth, speaketh to men unto edification and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. xiv, 3); "except you utter by the tongue plain speech, how shall it be known what is said? For you shall be speaking into the air" (*Ibid.* 9). And even common sense itself tells us that good delivery must be admitted to be the very foundation of all successful preaching. Yet how often do we not unfortunately see preachers literally "beating the air"; some speaking in such low conversational tones that they are altogether inaudible; others shouting with all their might, but utterly unintelligible; others, again, whose enunciation is sometimes clear only by accident, whom we can follow only at uncertain and indefinite intervals, patching up their meaning with painful and unsuccessful effort. Those faults are sometimes due to ignorance of the principles of public speaking and sometimes to a habit of forgetfulness of putting them into practice. How some can continue for so many years in such errors and defects can only be explained by the fact that the preacher himself is always the very last to advert to them—or to admit them. We must never forget that public speaking, and especially preaching,

depends for its very existence on the exercise of a special art—that of *delivery*.

According to Aristotle, the art of delivery is defined to be "the management of the voice." "It is the art," he says, "of knowing how to use the voice for the expression of each feeling, of knowing when it should be loud, low, or moderate, of managing the pitch—shrill, deep, or middle, and of adapting the cadences to the theme."

Some are naturally gifted in some measure with the secret of the art, and have no difficulty in making themselves at least easily heard and clearly understood even in the largest building. But these are very few indeed, and nearly everyone requires some special training in the principles and practice of speaking in public effectively.

Quintilian held that the subject of elocution was "the most important part of public instruction." And Lord Chesterfield says: "The art which teaches us how to persuade the mind and touch the heart must surely deserve the earliest attention. Every man, if he pleases, may speak perfectly instead of imperfectly; may be clear and perspicuous in his recitals, instead of dark and muddy; he may have grace instead of awkwardness in his gestures, and, in short, may be a very agreeable instead of a very disagreeable speaker, if he will take care and pains."

It may seem strange that elocution should be regarded as an art, since there is inherent in man a natural faculty of expressing his thoughts by means of speech. But this faculty is naturally exercised only in normal circumstances, as in ordinary conversation. The method of speaking used in addressing an individual or two would never succeed, how-

ever, in addressing a large audience. In the latter case we are in an altogether artificial position, and we very soon discover that our merely natural gifts do not suffice, but that we require something else in order to make ourselves even heard, not to say understood, when we speak in public to any considerable number. Herein lies the *art*. If we wish, for instance, to show a photograph to a friend or two, an ordinary *carte-de-visite* will do. But if we desire to show the picture to hundreds together at the same time, we must employ the aid of art. This we can accomplish by having, for instance, an enlarged reproduction of the picture thrown on a screen by the magic lantern. No one will notice that the picture, though perhaps that of a little child, is many times larger than the persón whom it represents, for it may be ten or twelve feet high, because the proper proportions have been preserved and no one part is enlarged at the expense of any other. In the same way, if we wish to address many hundreds of people together at the same time we must also employ the aid of art. We must, as it were, enlarge our word-picture many times but still preserve the true proportions of the various components of our speech-sound original, so that the result may appear quite natural and free from all exaggeration in any particular. In this lies the art of elocution, or delivery.

Before we attempt to address a public audience, especially from the pulpit, we should at least be able to speak clearly, distinctly, and agreeably even in the largest building. We cannot all hope to become great orators, but we can all accomplish this much.

We must first, then, examine briefly the nature

of the voice and the method of using it to the best advantage, for the voice is the instrument on which we must depend for the production of speech-sound; and upon the manner of using it will depend its character and expression, but especially its power of reaching the ears of our audience effectively.

CHAPTER XXII

VOICE AND BREATHING

THE instrument of speech is the voice, which is a wind-instrument of the class called reed-instruments. To this class belongs, for instance, the reed-pipe of an organ, in which the sonorous body is a column of air confined in a tube, the sound being originated by the vibration of the reed, caused by a current of air passing from a reservoir called the wind-chest, kept constantly supplied by the action of the bellows. The nature and depth of the tone depends on the dimensions of the tube, or resonating space, as well as on those of the reed itself.

We have a somewhat similar arrangement in the human voice, the "reed" consisting of two pieces of elastic tissue, called the *vocal cords,* which are stretched horizontally across the *larynx,* or voice-box (popularly called "Adam's Apple"). These are set in vibration by a stream of air rushing through the *trachea,* or wind-pipe. The lungs are the "wind-chests," which must be kept constantly supplied with air by the action of the "bellows." The latter consist of the *thorax* (chest), which is a chamber enclosed by the ribs, spine, breast-bone, collar-bone, and *diaphragm* (a powerful muscle forming the base of the chest).

To breathe correctly we must therefore aim at two things:—1. To fill as quickly and as completely as possible during each inspiration all the available space

in the thorax. 2. To have such control over the various muscles that take part in the process of expiration as to be able to cause every portion of our breath to do its own share of work in the actual production of sound, allowing none of it to escape in silence as mere breath. Failure to accomplish this causes distress to the speaker owing to the consequent necessity for more violent and more frequent efforts to keep up the supply. If we breathed correctly it would be possible to speak for hours without any injurious strain or fatigue; whereas we may often notice speakers quite husky and exhausted after only a short period of strenuous effort, on account of their prodigal and unnecessary waste of breath, with its attendant evils on the voice as well. Besides, when a speaker empties his lungs in this explosive fashion he is constrained to make frequent abrupt complete pauses, without considering their oratorical effect, in order to "catch his breath." The result is that *staccato* or "choppy" delivery which is so distressing to the audience as well as to the speaker himself.

There are three methods of breathing, known respectively as the *clavicular*, the *costal*, and the *diaphragmatic*, from the fact that inspiration is accomplished by raising the shoulders, by expanding the chest, or by the descent of the diaphragm respectively. The first method is to be condemned, as it tends to fill only the upper portion of the lungs and is most ungraceful in appearance as well. The costal method is better, but the diaphragmatic, or deep-breathing, method is naturally the best for ordinary purposes, where no very great or prolonged effort is required. Correct breathing for a public speaker should be a combination of this and the

costal method, and the habit is easily acquired by a little knowledge and practice.

To induce the correct method of breathing, recline at full length, having head and shoulders slightly raised, the hands joined under the head. Having placed a small object, such as a book, over the diaphragm—that is, a little below the breast-bone—take a long, deep breath through the nose, trying to raise the book slightly whilst doing so, but without any exertion of the abdominal muscles, however, except the natural expansion caused by the inspiration itself. Hold the breath for a moment or two, so as to allow the air to penetrate to every part of the lungs, then exhale as slowly, as gently, and as uniformly as possible, striving to control the escape so that perfectly even breathing is produced. Repeat this process ten or twelve times, carefully noting the nature and effects of the various stages and the action of the muscles which in this position we shall find at our disposal and fairly well under our control.

Having by this exercise "sensed" or located the position and action of the diaphragm, repeat the process without the book. Then repeat again whilst standing erect, the head well up, the neck against the collar, the back erect, but avoiding all muscular tension.

In order to secure the necessary conditions for the erect position, take a cane or an umbrella. Hold it in a horizontal position with both hands, the fingers on one side, the thumbs on the other. Lower it in front to the full length of the arms, adjusting the position of the hands so as to allow the thumbs just to touch the thighs. Now raise it over the head, and

lower it until it rests on the nape of the neck, taking care not to change the distance between the hands. Go through the previous breathing exercise in this position and you will feel what it is like to stand erect and breathe properly. Cultivate this habit and you will be strong to speak. Then speaking will be a pleasure and one of the healthiest forms of physical exercise, instead of a hard, disagreeable, and injurious task.

The first essential for a good voice is good health, which can be best secured and preserved by plenty of fresh air and exercise. If at rising and retiring we spend eight or ten minutes at the exercises just mentioned it will make a wonderful difference in our general health, and consequently in the richness and quality of our voice. Moreover, the habit of correct breathing will save our throat and vocal organs generally from the injurious strain to which faulty breathing must subject them. If we have contracted the baneful habit of mouth-breathing we should consult a physician, because we are exposing our lungs to air which is neither filtered, nor warmed, nor moistened, as nature demands, by passing through the nose.

Even when we have established the correct method of breathing it is still further necessary to secure the proper method of using the voice. And this not only to secure the best results in quality from that instrument, but to prevent positive injury from the abuse of it.

The sound of the voice is produced by the action of the air rushing from the trachea and causing the vocal cords to vibrate in the larynx. It is evident, then, that the nature of the sound depends for strength, or loudness, on the power and capacity of

the lungs and thorax; and for resonance, or quality, on the nature, size, and quality of the various cavities of the mouth and throat enclosing the air to which the vibrations are transmitted, as in the case of the reed-pipe of an organ. The throat muscles should therefore be allowed to remain as far as possible in repose. If these are brought into action they not only interfere with the free passage of the air into the larynx, but fill up a great portion of the resonating space as well, thus interfering with the clearness of tone as well as with the volume of air to which the vibrations are transmitted and on which depend the overtones which give *quality,* especially fulness. Indeed *the great secret for securing a perfect voice for either speaking or singing is the production of sound without moving the throat muscles.* When these muscles are brought into play, not only is the resonating space diminished but the vocal cords, the larynx and the throat generally are subjected to an unnatural strain, the result being frequently what is popularly called "clergyman's sore throat," a disease which is by no means confined to preachers however, for actors, barristers, politicians, schoolmasters, singers, and street-criers frequently suffer from it.

If the throat is really bad from this disease the best thing to do is to consult a physician, as the complications that may occur are many. But the legitimate use of the voice should never cause any ill effects. Hence, as prevention is better than cure, it is most important for us to learn how to use properly this wonderful instrument upon which so much of our success in preaching depends. "How wonderful is the human voice! It is indeed the organ of the soul," says Longfellow.

CHAPTER XXIII

VOICE PRODUCTION

PERHAPS the best way to describe the worst method of using the voice is to say that it issues from the speaker in a kind of muffled undertone, or loud "stage whisper." When extra force is then used the result is a shrieking effect which seems to tear the throat, and certainly succeeds in actually injuring the entire vocal mechanism. This is caused in the first place by the fact that the current of air is directed in a thick blast rather than in a thin, steady, gentle stream against the delicate vocal cords; and in the next place, by the fact that in its egress it strikes against the soft palate (back in the throat), instead of against the hard palate. The latter is the roof of the mouth, which ought to act as a sound-reflector and send forth the voice in clear, ringing, open tones. In addition to these two defects we have as a consequence the defect already referred to, which is caused by the filling up of the resonating space by this very action of the throat muscles.

We can remedy all this by the regular use of a very simple exercise.

The soft palate is attached to the lower part of the hard palate, hanging over the root of the tongue, and ending in the *uvula*. When we inhale through the nose, the soft palate descends, and when we exhale it ascends again. Failure to ascend is the immediate cause of the dulness or thickness of the voice which has been mentioned. In the production of the vowel-

sounds the soft palate plays the most important part, therefore, from what may be called a negative point of view, because it has such power of interference. We must then train it to keep out of the way.

The vowel-sound in the word *let* is the easiest of all to produce, and cannot be sounded properly except on the hard palate, for in the production of this sound the soft palate must automatically ascend. Let us, then, take a deep breath through the nose, and then intone the word *let,* dwelling on the vowel-sound as long as we can do so with perfect ease and without moving any of the throat muscles, only finishing the word when the breath is nearly but not quite exhausted. When we succeed in bringing the voice "forward" thus, and notice a clear, ringing, open tone, we have practically solved all difficulties of voice management and production, for we have at least discovered the correct method of securing perfect tone and colour.

We may now try the same sound on the various notes of the musical scale, now ascending, now descending, now striking one interval and now another, now increasing in force or loudness, and now diminishing, elongating and dwelling on the vowel-sound. By the regular practice of this exercise even for a few minutes three or four times a day, we shall soon notice a wonderful improvement in clearness, resonance, and ease of utterance. In fact our voice may develop an altogether new and delightful *colour* which hitherto had been concealed. During practice we should be careful to stand in the correct position already described.

We may now attend more particularly to the control of the breath by endeavouring to sustain the

sound as long as possible with perfect ease. Our first attempts may perhaps result in short, explosive efforts, owing to waste of breath, but soon we shall be able so to control our entire vocal machinery as to be able to keep up the clear and resonant production of the sound for an astonishing period. If we can with perfect ease prolong it for at least thirty seconds we may safely say that we have both voice and breathing under perfect control.

When we have arrived at this stage we must pay attention to the various other vowel-sounds, giving to each its proper measure of tone and character, practising each in a similar manner, with careful advertence to quality and ease of production.

CHAPTER XXIV

PRONUNCIATION

CORRECT pronunciation depends upon three things, namely, pure *vocality*, good *articulation*, and correct *accentuation*. Pure vocality means the accurate rendering of the various vowel-sounds. We must train our ears and voices to recognize and reproduce them as they are pronounced by educated people who are free from all peculiarities of speech or dialect.

A common fault in vowel pronunciation is the substitution of one vowel for another, as, for example, of *e* for *a* in catch, *u* for *i* in such words as civil, chalice, etc. In the latter case the fault is due to carelessness in regard to the unaccented vowels. Yet "it is in the delicate but firm utterance of the unaccented vowels with correct sound that the cultured person is most surely distinguished from the uncultured" (P. G. WHITE).

Sometimes the correct vowel is used, but it is made long instead of short, as in admírably for ádmirably; or short instead of long as in ábdomen for abdómen. This is merely due to misplacement of the accent. Sometimes a vowel is slurred over or altogether omitted, as in gard'n for garden; and sometimes a vowel is sounded where it should be almost silent, as the *i* in basin, evil, devil, etc., the final consonant being sounded with the aid of a "neutral" vowel.

By good *articulation* is meant the full and proper sounding of the various consonants. This does not

present so much difficulty, provided we advert to the necessity for sounding those which ought to be sounded. But it is this very want of advertence which actually makes good articulation the most important element in distinctness and clearness of utterance in English. It is related of an eminent divine that "in the pulpit he spoke with the accent of a man of sense, such as he was in a superior degree; but it was remarkable, and, to those who did not know the cause, mysterious, that there was not a corner of the church in which he could not be heard distinctly. The reason assigned was that he had made it an invariable rule to do justice to every consonant, knowing that the vowels would take care of themselves. And thus he became the surest and clearest of speakers" (JONES: *Life of Bishop Horne*).

We must, therefore, in the first place, secure the correct and clear pronunciation of the various consonants; and in the second place, take care that we give to each its proper value, never slurring over or omitting any that ought to be fully sounded, nor sounding any that ought to be silent, for, as in the case of the vowels, we cannot always judge of the proper pronunciation of English words from the mere spelling. So we must not say "acs" for acts," "artic" for "arctic," "apos-t-le" for "apos(t)le," "epis-t-le" for "epis(t)le," "of-t-en" for "of(t)en," etc.

"There is a vicious mode of amalgamating the final *s* of a word (and sometimes the final *c*, when preceded and followed by the vowel) with the first letter of the next word, if that letter happens to a *y*, in such a manner as to produce the sound of *sh* or of *usu* in usual, as: *Anishe* young man. What *makesh* you

laugh? If he *offendsh* you don't speak to him. *Ash* you please. Not *jush* yet. We always *passh* your house in going to call on *Missh* Yates—she lives near *Palash* Yard; and so on through all the possibilities of such a combination. This is decided unmitigated cockneyism" (GWYNNE).

"Take care of the consonants and the vowels will take care of themselves" is an old and very useful rule. Constant practice in reading aloud with this object in view, and the exercise of a little advertence when speaking, will serve to induce a correct habit, so that we can afterwards without conscious effort secure perfect articulation. The advice of some to practise in a loud whisper is, we think, to be condemned, the chief reason being that it leads to the habit of speaking on the soft palate (back in the throat). If we cannot speak aloud and naturally when we practise, it will be far better to form the words with the lips only, or to speak in a real whisper. We must, moreover, read slowly but surely when we practise. We may afterwards try increase of speed, as it may sometimes be necessary to speak very rapidly, yet very clearly and distinctly. An excellent method of securing perfection in articulation is to read a passage backwards, as we have then no inclination to rush words together.

With regard to accentuation it is enough to say that we can obtain a knowledge of it by occasionally consulting a good dictionary, by listening to cultured speakers, and by the exercise of a little advertence. Whilst placing the accent on the proper syllable we must not forget to attend to the proper sounding of the unaccented syllables also. Finally, we must be careful not to over-pronounce in an affected manner,

especially in the case of the consonants, for "e'en in speaking we may seem too just."

Some speakers, in order to secure full articulation, insert a redundant vowel-sound between certain words, so that they seem to be speaking Italian rather than English. Others have what is technically known as "bad attack," prefixing a nasal sound on which they appear to climb up to the actual word. If we find any difficulty in separating our consonants clearly, we can easily overcome it by the simple process of dropping the lower jaw in silence, without inserting any redundant vowel-sound. In other words, we must open our mouths, as it is impossible to articulate properly when the jaws are held rigid, or the teeth locked together.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PRINCIPLES OF MODULATION

WE have now examined what may be called the materials of delivery—the *materia* as distinct from the *forma* of elocution. We have had our attention chiefly confined to the mechanism of the instrument on which we are to practise, and the correct manner of using it. But we have yet to examine the principles which are involved in causing that instrument to give expression to our sentiments, so that there shall be no mistaking the impressions we mean to produce in the minds of our hearers.

The main object of all speech is to compare ideas, or concepts of the mind, by expressing agreement or disagreement, identity or difference between them, for "language is but the picture and counterpart of thought" and "all words are pegs to hang ideas on." Thus, for instance, when we say: "I hope for heaven," "I love God," "I am glad to see you," we express agreement between two ideas—between those of *hope* and *heaven, love* and *God, gladness* and *seeing you.* When we say, for instance: "I hate sin," "I am sorry for it," "I fear hell," we clearly wish to express a disagreement between two ideas—between those of *love* and *sin,* etc. When we use such phrases as, for instance: "Thou art the man," "He is not the king," we express identity of ideas in the former case, difference in the latter. This is the foundation and reason of all speech, and so when

we converse we are truly said to exchange or compare our ideas.

When we come to examine the *manner* in which people naturally give expression to various ideas, we find that they make use of many and subtle changes of voice with regard to tone, expression, emphasis, etc., beyond the mere mechanical repetition of the words. This is an instinct of nature which helps to express, even much more clearly than the actual words used, the ideas or shades of meaning we wish to convey. Thus, for instance, whenever we ask a question we seem to place a definite peculiar "mark" upon it, rendering our speech incomplete in some way, and clearly showing that we expect an answer. So, too, whenever we have good news to convey, we show it by the very expression of our words as well as by our countenance and whole bearing. The very opposite tones, gestures, and whole appearance and expression are used whenever we have bad news to tell or something sad to relate. So, "the voice all modes of passion can express," and, as Montaigne says, "the tone and motion of my voice carries with it a great deal of the expression and significance of my meaning . . . There is a voice to instruct, a voice to flatter, and a voice to reprehend." The study of elocution in this sense, therefore, is the study of the natural principles of modulation in our delivery. This is the study of nature herself, and the *art* of speaking well consequently

> Lies not in trick, or attitude, or start;
> Nature's true knowledge is the only art.
>
> LLOYD.

And the *science* of elocution, or delivery, consists in

No observance of mechanic laws,
No settled maxims of a favourite stage,
No rules delivered down from age to age,
Ibid.

but in a careful study of natural principles, for, after all rules and methods have been discussed, we must ultimately depend upon nature for direction—"art must anchor in nature."

We accordingly proceed to examine the various changes of voice which nature herself seems to suggest, which we may ourselves observe, and which we use in normal circumstances by a kind of instinct; analyse and classify them according to natural laws and logical methods, so that we may grasp the principles which underlie nature and be able afterwards to apply them in circumstances where nature is not at hand to assist and direct us. The examination and classification of such natural changes of voice and the reasons for them constitute the science of elocution *formaliter talis,* that is, the natural principles of modulation. But as art does not lie in merely copying nature, being rather the perfection of nature, the study of this science will not confine us in any way to "observance of mechanic laws," but will allow full scope for the development of our individual and peculiar genius, or natural gifts, as well as for the acquisition of those "nameless graces which no methods teach."

Many public speakers despise the study of elocution and would consider it beneath their dignity to indulge in the practice of such simple exercises as have been already recommended. They falsely imagine that such training is necessary only for young people who wish to become reciters, or for actors or singers who

intend to make their living on the stage. Preachers are indeed generally in more danger of neglecting it. They are as a rule practically free from all unfavourable criticism, with the result that they live in a kind of fool's paradise, for no one is going to say to a preacher, for instance, "I did not hear a word you said," or "I could only with difficulty make out what you were speaking about, although I was quite close to the pulpit."

As the simple exercises and examples usually given are the only means of securing proper use and control of the vocal machinery and its various functions, no one who wishes to be heard distinctly, not to say clearly and agreeably, can afford to despise them. They are merely exercises and not models of what is to be done in actual delivery in the pulpit. Surely the athlete who wishes to keep himself fit seeks to train not only the individual muscles he will actually use in his contests but his entire respiratory, digestive, circulatory, and muscular system. The runner will use the punching-ball, the dumb-bells, and the Indian clubs as well as the pugilist, who, in his turn, will take long walks and indulge in short sprints, while both will endeavour, like the jockey (though not for the same reason exactly) to get rid of all superfluous flesh, although the one is not going to run on his hands, nor the other to fight with his feet, and neither is going to compete on horseback. The *prima donna* sings her scales, the great musician plays all kinds of chords, though the items both intend to present in public will certainly have a vastly more sublime significance. But in these, as in other matters, "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Luke xvi, 8);

and if preachers had to make their living according to the quality of their preaching, they would perhaps pay more attention to the acquirement of perfection in the art of public speaking. "I recite falsehoods," said Garrick to a clergyman who was a poor preacher, "as if they were true; and you recite truths as if they were falsehoods."

Let us then examine what exactly constitutes the essence of good delivery, what the value and effects of those elements of which it consists, and how we may make the best use of each.

On a careful analysis of the matter we find that these changes of voice depend upon a number of separate and distinct factors, which can be reduced to the following separate elements: Pause, Time, Force, Inflection, Pitch, Emphasis, and Expression. One main principle governs the correct natural use of these, which may be enunciated as follows: All differences of ideas require for their full and proper expression corresponding differences of voice with regard to the elements of Pause, Time, Force, Inflection, Pitch, Emphasis, and Expression, or combinations of any or of all of them. By applying this general principle, which is founded on nature herself, to any particular case, we may practically dispense with all other "rules," in so far at least as they appear to be mere arbitrary laws without a just and natural foundation.

CHAPTER XXVI

RATE OF DELIVERY

IT has been already explained that if we wish to address a large audience we must enlarge our "word-picture" many times, and at the same time still preserve the true proportions of the various components of our speech-sound original, so that the result will appear quite natural and free from all exaggeration in any particular. Now one of the most prominent and most important components of our word-picture is found in the *rate* at which we speak.

This pace, or rate, depends upon three separate elements, namely, the duration of the various sounds, the duration of the various pauses, and the number of these pauses. Of these, the first has the most important effect in the process of enlargement, and is known as the element of *time*. We make *slow time* by elongating the vowels and dwelling on the consonants; *quick time* by pronouncing them "trippingly." The value of the second and third elements is obvious. Both combined constitute the element of *pause*.

If, when we speak in a large building, or to someone at a distance, we merely use extra stress on the accented syllables, as we should be most likely to do, we should never be understood, the reason being that we have unconsciously enlarged one portion of our word-picture at the expense of the rest, and so disturbed the true proportions and distorted the general effect. We should accordingly in such cir-

cumstances use not only extra force on the accented syllables but we should also elongate the vowels and dwell on the consonants, the latter process automatically giving to the unaccented syllables their proper proportion of increase or enlargement. The whole effect is considerably enhanced by the employment of another element—that of more frequent and more prolonged *pause*.

Whilst we must employ slower time throughout in order to be understood at all in a large building, we must be careful also to make necessary relative changes in our general *rate* in order to express the full meaning of certain ideas. We naturally express all ideas of joy, impatience, eagerness, etc., by *quick time;* and the opposite ones of sorrow, etc., by *slow time*.

In this, as in all the elements of modulation generally, we must regard the principal idea to be expressed rather than the mere individual words or subordinate ideas, because sometimes one idea overrides another, or even several subordinate ones. Thus, for example, we should use *quick time* in delivering the last line of the following verses, although the idea in the actual words themselves would, if unqualified, naturally demand slow time. The main idea is that contained in the words *chase away*:—

> . . . the sick,
> Hailing the welcome light and sounds that chase
> The death-like images of the dark away.

So, in parenthetic, intermediate, and explanatory clauses, no matter what the sense expressed by the actual words, as apart from their context, a slightly increased rate must be employed.

A *pause* may be either a complete cessation of the voice or a mere suspension. The grammatical pause is merely a mechanical aid to the eye in making clear the exact meaning of the written page. The rhetorical pause is that by which we clearly distinguish in our delivery of the spoken word the exact sense intended, and is consequently of the utmost importance. Being made according to the sense and sentiment, it is a very natural and effective method of distinguishing different ideas. It must not be imagined that it is always a complete cessation of the voice, otherwise its frequent use would cause that *staccato* or "choppy" delivery which is so unpleasant to everyone. Frequently, where there is a complete change of ideas, it will of course be necessary to make corresponding complete cessations; but more frequently the mere suspension of the voice on a word or syllable will be sufficient not only to express the full sense, but also to give an opportunity of taking breath. *Pause* need not therefore interfere with that continuous and pleasing "flow" of speech which is so characteristic of good delivery, and from which indeed the very word *rhetoric* takes its name.

Without attempting to lay down any specific "rules" which would only puzzle the student in what is in reality a very simple matter, we give the following examples of circumstances in which our own judgement will naturally tell us the pause ought to be used. (The sign / signifies a mere suspension of the voice; //, a complete cessation):—

1. Between words, phrases, etc., which express ideas that are distinct and separate. *E.g.*: "Friends / Romans / Countrymen / lend me your ears." "Let all the ends thou aim'st at be / thy country's / thy

God's / and truth's." "He that giveth to the poor / lendeth to the Lord." "A young man / according to his way / even when he is old / he will not depart from it."

2. After *but* and disjunctive particles generally when they precede important clauses. The latter usually contain a reason or an explanation of importance, which is thus made prominent. *E.g.:* "This / is my answer // Not / that I loved Cæsar less / but // that I loved Rome / more." "I will not call him / villain / because // it would be / unparliamentary."

3. Generally before relative pronouns, conjunctions, and infinitives connecting parts of sentences. *E.g.:* "Be silent / that you may hear." "They come / to free us from the yoke of error."

4. Before and after parentheses, explanatory and intermediate clauses. *E.g.:* "Who / (though he had no hand in his death) / shall receive the benefit of his dying / (a place in the commonwealth) / as which of you shall not?"

Sometimes a pause will be effectively introduced before, sometimes after, and sometimes both before and after words, clauses and sentences to which we desire to direct very special attention. *E.g.:* "Only great in that strange spell // *a name.*" "There is / joy / for his fortune // honour / for his valour // and // *death* // for his ambition."

A sudden long pause is sometimes very effective. *E.g.:* "Oh, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth, that I am meek and gentle with these // *butchers.*" "You called me misbeliever, cut-throat // *dog.*" "I should answer with // *a blow.*"

The element of *pause* is so important that without

its aid we can scarcely express the sense of any passage, although using all the other elements at our disposal; whilst if we pause in the right places it is possible to express the general sense fairly well by the use of this element alone. "Talking is like playing on the harp," says Holmes; "there is as much in laying the hands on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out the music."

If the building in which we speak is extra large, or contains only a proportionately small audience, we must be still more careful as to the rate of our delivery, making slower time generally, elongating the vowels and dwelling on the consonants as much as possible, making more frequent and more prolonged pauses, otherwise the echoes of our words will return and mix with the sounds of those that are being uttered, thus increasing the indistinctness and "making confusion worse confounded."

Knowing these general principles, our own taste and discretion will be our best guide. As a rule, beginners, and indeed even so-called experienced speakers also, are inclined to go much too fast. We ought, therefore, to guard against this fault from the very beginning, because a habit of this kind once formed is extremely difficult to cure.

> Learn to speak slow; all other graces
> Will follow in their proper places.

It would be a most useful help if we could, at least in the beginning of our career, arrange to have a friend at the farthest corner of the building in which we speak, who, when he failed to catch any of our words or sentences, would immediately notify the fact by some simple, unobtrusive signal, such as raising

the hand to the head, taking out a handkerchief or the like. This would be both a safeguard and a test in connection with the most important of all the necessary qualities of public speaking—clearness and distinctness of utterance. This is a quality which might supply for many deficiencies, but one for the absence of which not all the other good qualities combined could possibly atone in the least.

CHAPTER XXVII

FORCE, EMPHASIS, AND EXPRESSION

FORCE is the degree of loudness with which we speak. Its most common effect is found in the stress applied to certain syllables to mark the accent of words, and to words themselves to mark *emphasis*. It is also used in phrases, sentences, and passages to draw special attention to ideas of anger, determination, strong conviction, etc. When we are actually under the influence of such feelings or sentiments as these we naturally make use of extra *force*, and hence the use of this element will naturally suggest itself where necessary. We must be careful, however, to avoid its use when unnecessary. "No doubt," says Dutton Cook, "a measure of success has always attended the efforts of the vociferous." But he goes on to explain that *continued force* is never successful. And he relates a story of "a country manager, who inquired of a youthful candidate to histrionic honours: 'Can you shout?' 'I rather flatter myself I can,' was the reply. 'Then,' enjoined the manager, 'learn to shout in the right place, and you'll do.'"

The element of *force* is one in the use of which inexperienced speakers sin by excess rather than by defect. They are naturally anxious to make themselves heard; but it is a grave mistake to suppose that mere increase of *force* always means increase of clearness and distinctness. Indeed the very opposite is generally the case, for excess in the use of force necessarily implies a corresponding deficiency in the use of some other

element or elements, thus destroying the proper proportions of the word-picture. The softest and least forcible tones of a trained speaker, who has all the elements of modulation under his judicious control, are as distinct and intelligible as when he uses all the force at his command; and

> More nature oft and finest strokes are shown
> In the low whisper than tempestuous tone.
>
> LLOYD.

In this as in everything else we must avoid both extremes, however—

> Some placid natures fill the allotted scene
> With lifeless drone, insipid and serene;
> While others thunder every couplet o'er
> And almost crack your ears with rant and roar.
>
> *Ibid.*

We must be especially careful when using extra force in the portrayal of anger, indignation, and such emotions to avoid shrieking, shouting, or "ranting," by keeping the throat muscles at rest as much as possible. Otherwise we shall not only lose the dignity compatible with the delivery of such sentiments, but cause indistinctness of utterance, injury to our throats and voices, and general distress to ourselves and to our audience.

It will be seen, therefore, that force is merely one of the many means of securing proper *emphasis*. When force alone is used it may be called *simple* emphasis. *Compound* emphasis is secured by the combination with force of any or of all of the various other elements.

Just as there are words "whose sound is an echo to their sense," such as buzz, hum, etc., so there are

phrases, sentences, and even whole passages, whose meaning we can more effectively express by a compound emphasis which is a kind of imitation of the general sentiment. Thus we can make our voices light and cheerful, sad and solemn, deep and rugged, simple or sublime, according to the nature of the prevailing idea or general sense.

All these effects are specially aided by the use of the element of *expression* (*supra,* p. 143). By this we mean that peculiar quality or colour of the voice used in signifying certain depths of feeling or emotion. It is in turn helped by the judicious management of pause, time, etc. But there is in addition to all the other elements that may be employed that indefinable character, soul, or feeling, which naturally seems to manifest itself when we have true sympathy with the emotional ideas we wish to portray The best way, therefore, to acquire this very desirable quality is to believe and feel the truth of what we say, and to be in earnest in trying to communicate it. "The thoughtful actor is enjoined," says Dutton Cook, "always to remember that he is never to begin to utter even so much as a single word 'till he has first reflected on and felt the idea' of the passion he would depict, and then adapted his look and his nerves to express it. But so soon as this sensation has strongly and fully possessed his fancy, then—and never a moment before—he may attempt to speak. 'He will then always hit the right and touching sensibility of tone and move his audience impressively'; whereas, should he with an unfeeling volubility of cadence hurry on from one over-heaped distinction to another, without due adaptation of his look and muscles to the meaning proper to the passion, he will never speak to hearts, nor move him-

self, nor any of his audience, beyond the simple and unanimating verbal sense, without the spirit of the writer."

It was on the judicious use of this element of expression that much of the success of that prince of orators, John Bright, depended. It is said of him that "there was a tremor in his voice in the touching parts of his great speeches which stirred the feelings even of hostile listeners. . . . The tender, half-broken tones in which the words were said, the inexpressible pathos of his voice and manner were never forgotten by those who heard him." John Bright had soul and feeling. He meant what he said. And when the heart feels our words must ring true, for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xi, 34).

Even if the preacher were merely representing the ideas of others, as in reading, reciting, or acting, it would still be necessary for him, as Coquelin says, "to re-cast his individuality" by endeavouring to acquire at least full sympathy with his subject. Now if even in mere acting,

> Here lies the golden secret: *Learn to feel.*
> Or fool or monarch, happy or distressed,
> No actor pleases that is not possessed,
> LLOYD.

it is all the more necessary for the preacher to be fully persuaded of the truth, sublimity and importance of the truths which he conveys and the message which he delivers. He, above all others, must "re-cast his individuality." And this he can do only by following the advice of Saint Paul: "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind: and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv, 23, 24).

"The study of the saints," says Butler (*Life of St Maximus*), "was the art of living well, and of putting on the spirit of Christ. This was their employment both in their deserts and in the world: this is the only end of man, the only means which can conduct him to present and future happiness. . . . This science is learned by listening to instructions, pious reading and meditation, and opening to the heavenly doctrine not only our understanding but also our hearts. And it is to be deeply and experimentally imprinted in our souls by the practice of all virtues."

The preacher must by study and contemplation so transform himself that the very spirit of religion will shine out of him in his whole life and bearing as well as in his burning words. The latter will then no longer be "unanimating verbal expressions," dry bones, or lifeless bodies, but will in turn be transformed into living realities, full of grace and beauty, of strength and power, "an exceeding great army."

It is this additional element of truth, of reality, and of eternal and infinite importance to every living soul in his audience as well as to himself that gives to the preacher such a wonderful natural advantage even, not only over the reader, the reciter, or the actor, but over every other class of orator who deals with matters of mere time, however sublime, however important, and even however true, for nothing in this world can ever compare with the interest which is naturally aroused by the consideration of those truths upon which depend the affairs of eternity.

But above and beyond this natural advantage which the pulpit orator possesses over all others there is still the far more important supernatural help which he receives from God for the fruitful discharge of the duties

of his ministry of preaching. And beyond this even still there is in the message which he announces and in the divine truths which he conveys that special and peculiar supernatural efficacy which is inherent in the official word of God, and which constitutes it that wonderful power for good which only Almighty God himself could form even out of an instrument of such sublime and eternal importance in itself.

CHAPTER XXVIII

INFLECTION

INFLECTION is either a raising or a lowering of the tone of the voice on a particular word or syllable; or rather it is a sliding of the voice upward or downward to a higher or lower note respectively. It is a most important element in modulation, for without it speech would be a sad monotonous drawl. It is one of the most natural methods of expressing particular shades of meaning which the words themselves could not adequately convey, for of course even the very same words may have totally different meanings, and one that we accordingly use most naturally in ordinary conversation.

There are three classes of inflections—the *rising*, the *falling*, and the *circumflex*.

The *rising inflection* is a change or slide from a lower note (generally the ordinary or middle note of the voice) to a higher.

The *falling inflection* is a change or slide downward from a higher to a lower note.

The *circumflex inflection* is a combination of both rising and falling inflections, and is of two kinds :—

The *rising circumflex* is a combination of falling and rising inflections, respectively, and denotes admiration, etc.

The *falling circumflex* is a combination of rising and falling inflections, respectively, and denotes contempt, etc.

One general principle governs the use of these

inflections, namely: All ideas of incompleteness are expressed by the *rising*, and all ideas of completeness by the *falling* inflection. Hence, in expressing ideas of joy, hope, suspense, anxiety, doubt, questioning, etc., the *rising* inflection is used; ideas of sorrow, despair, calmness, conviction, finality, etc., are expressed by the *falling* inflection. That this is but following nature is seen from the fact that when we really are under the influence of the former class of sentiments, feelings, or emotions, the whole tendency of our natural expression is "upwards." The hands tend to rise, so do the lines of the mouth, the eyes, the eyebrows, the whole features, and even the head and shoulders; and the *voice* is no exception, as we may notice from our own experience and from the observance of others. When we are moved by the latter class of ideas or emotions, the whole tendency of the body is "downwards"—the head sinks, the hands drop, the eyes, the features, and the voice as well.

When we contrast opposite ideas, then we must accordingly use opposite inflections. *E.g.:* "The rích and the pòor, the hígh and the lòw, the leárned and the unlèarned, the kíng as well as the beġgar, must all die."

In the rising and falling inflections we may still further distinguish two degrees. The first degree rises or falls what may be called a half "tone"; the second degree rises or falls a full "tone." The latter is therefore much more emphatic. Its use occurs when, for instance, we have a series of words or phrases requiring a corresponding series of inflections, rising or falling as the case may be, or both successively, until the climax is reached, on which we finish as a rule with the second degree, or full "tone." Thus, for

example: "They fight for power, for plunder, and extended rule; we for our country, our altars, and our homes."

Besides all these varieties of note or tone, there are a multitude of others above, below, and between them, which are so slight that it is impossible to describe or to represent them, and which depend upon the taste, judgement, and delicate sense of perception of the speaker. We have therefore a fairly wide range even in this apparently small compass of the voice.

Although much must be left to individual taste, there are some cases, however, in which the use of the rising or falling inflection is so obviously required by nature that no choice may be allowed. Thus, for instance, a direct question with its answer will always naturally require the rising inflection on the question and the falling inflection on the answer. *E.g.*: "Hold you the watch to-ńight? We dò, my lord."

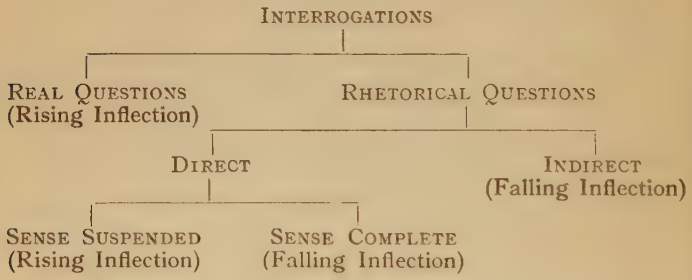
Some writers make a lot of difficulty about the inflection to be used in interrogations. One, for example, says: "The interrogation seems to me to be very imperfectly understood in reading" (FLEMING: *The Art of Reading and Speaking*). According to him, all questions are either direct or indirect, the former being those answerable by *yes* or *no*, and the latter being those that cannot be thus answered. And he gives an "infallible rule" that "the voice shall rise on all direct questions and fall on all indirect questions." Yet this alleged "infallible" rule does not work out successfully in one of the very examples he gives to prove it. Thus, the question "If you wrong us, shall we not revenge?" can be answered by yes or no, yet he marks it with the *falling* inflection. The remaining questions of the passage: "If a Jew

wrong a Christian, what is his humility? Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example? Why—revenge," though not answerable by *yes* or *no,* clearly require the *rising* inflection. According to Bell, who treats of the subject more logically, "such questions are not necessarily answerable by *yes* or *no,*" and so denies the assumption on which the alleged "infallible rule" is founded.

In reality nothing is so simple as this matter of inflection in interrogations, if we apply the one general principle given above, namely: All ideas of incompleteness are expressed by the *rising* inflection, and all ideas of completeness by the *falling* inflection. Now a question to which we expect an answer which is indeterminate is evidently incomplete, and consequently will naturally require the *rising* inflection. Such an interrogation we call a *real question.* Thus, for example: "Can you see? Can you hear? What is your name? Where are you going?" all naturally require the rising inflection. All other interrogations we call *rhetorical questions,* of which there are two kinds, *direct* and *indirect.* The indirect rhetorical question is simply a question which is quoted in a sentence. It should therefore be delivered as part of that sentence, and accordingly with the *falling* inflection. Thus, for example: "The true consideration is, has he abused his power?" The direct rhetorical question is merely interrogative in form. Sometimes the sense is left suspended for effect, as if it were a real question, when it accordingly takes the *rising* inflection. Thus, for example: "Would an infinitely wise being create man for a mean purpose?" Sometimes the answer is included in the same sentence, and

so, though interrogative in form, the sentence as a whole is really a strong statement of fact, and thus takes the *falling* inflection. Thus: "What drink'st thou oft instead of homage sweet but poisoned flattery?" "On whom does time hang so heavily as on the slothful and indolent?"

The following will make all these points clear:—



CHAPTER XXIX

PITCH

THE most common fault of otherwise good speakers, and the most pleasing and effective quality of accomplished orators, depends upon the element of *pitch,* by which is meant the height or depth of the predominating tone. It may be called the "key" in which we speak. Upon its extent and variety depends the range or compass of the voice.

We may have a splendid voice; we may pronounce our words clearly and accurately; we may arrange our pauses and use our inflections correctly; but if we do all this in the same predominating tone, or "key," without attending to variations of pitch, our discourse will be relatively monotonous and "sing-song." We place the utmost value on the skilful use of this element of modulation, for it is the judicious blending of inflection and pitch that constitutes the chief charm of the polished orator. It is the artistic combination of these two elements that gives him the entire musical scale from which to call forth his greatest powers of expression.

Although the human voice ranges through a very wide variety of tones, we may for the sake of clearness and simplicity make three main divisions, namely, the *upper, middle,* and *lower* pitches. The *upper pitch* is that tone of voice used in speaking to someone at a distance; the *middle pitch* is the ordinary conversational tone; and the *lower pitch* is that tone used when speaking in a subdued tone to anyone very near.

The voice may of course range much above and below what we have called the upper and lower pitches respectively.

A most important thing for us to remember is that in each of these pitches or keys we have the various inflections as well. The middle pitch is, however, the most important to cultivate and strengthen, as it is also the easiest. The upper pitches are more difficult, and the lower pitches much more so. We may train our voices to be strong, clear, and resonant on all pitches and tones by means of the exercise on the word *let,* given above.

Our main principle that all differences of ideas require for their proper expression corresponding differences of time, pause, force, etc., will be a sufficient guide for us in the use of this element. Thus, all ideas of joy, hope, etc., will naturally be expressed in the higher pitches; those of sadness, despair, etc., in the lower pitches. When we have a series of main ideas requiring a series of different pitches, we must be careful to begin high enough or low enough, as the case may be, in order to get them all in gracefully and with ease. An example of ascending and descending series is found in the famous sentence: "As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him." Here the pitch increases by successive stages up to the highest note on the word "ambitious," and then descends to the lowest on the words "I slew him." An example of what may be called evenly balanced series is found in Sheridan's "Rolla to the Peruvians," a speech which is full of ascending and descending series of contrasts.

Light narrative passages should be rendered in the bright upper tones; those of sublimity, awe, immensity, etc., in that full, deep, low tone, called "orotund" from the shape of the mouth used in its production (*ore rotundo*).

If we speak in a very large or fairly empty building, we must as a rule raise the pitch throughout; that is, the predominating tone must be generally higher all round, just as in the same circumstances we must increase the number and duration of our *pauses*, make our *time* slower (by elongating the vowels and dwelling on the consonants) and increase our *force*. But we must be extremely careful when using increased *force*, especially on the higher pitches, to avoid shrieking, shouting, or "ranting."

Absence of change of pitch produces *relative monotone*, the inflections being employed as usual. *Absolute monotone* is the absence of all variation of tone, both of inflection and of pitch. In prayer, for instance, we use the relative monotone, the same pitch (that of reverence and supplication) being kept throughout, the change of inflection alone being sufficient to give the necessary meaning and expression. Hence it would be a great mistake to "declaim" a prayer, as some do when reading long prayers such as "the Acts," for which the so-called "rules" of elocution are often blamed wrongfully. Our main principle that in all such cases we must consider the *main idea* as overruling all others will save the intelligent student from such an egregious error.

Now that we have completed the examination of the range, or scale, of delivery, with its components of *inflection* and *pitch*, forming as it were the "notes" and "keys" of the instrument of the voice, after the

manner of a musical scale, let us endeavour to show by a graphic sketch some of the wonderful and varied changes of tone which may enter into the delivery of some passages when correctly rendered.

We have said *after the manner of* a musical scale because it must not be supposed that we can reduce the elements of speech sound to such definite concrete values as those of the notes and keys of a strictly musical scale. The notes of music are each of a fixed value and character, whilst the "notes" of speech, while being found in the musical scale, are so numerous as to elude definite placing, the series being frequently composed of infinitesimally small variations, or "slides." In other words, the notes of music are *concrete*, but the "notes" of speech-sound are *discrete*. This is made beautifully clear in the course of an interesting article by Alex. Grant—"Voices in Parliament" (*Strand Magazine*, London, Feb. 1904)—from which we take the following: "Anyone familiar with the theories and principles of speech sounds knows that it is an impossibility to render accurately the multitude of sounds occurring in even a short typical passage. Different plans for writing speech sounds have been tried, with varying success. Any system aiming at scientific accuracy implies a degree of minute analysis which is impracticable in an endeavour to procure an estimate of the pitch and average inflection of numerous voices heard at some distance and under conditions not favourable to close scrutiny. In speech a single syllable may traverse half an octave, a semitone, or a fraction of a semitone, and it may be jerked out in separate tones or undulate in portamento. There is usually, however, a prime sound, which may be

more prominent and longer sustained than the other sounds that go to round off the syllable. With a succession of those prime sounds, which, for convenience, may be called notes, it is possible to give a rough notion (which is all that is claimed here) of how a speaker's voice rises and falls in the hearing of an ordinary listener."

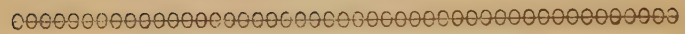
We do not adopt the writer's plan, as a knowledge of musical notation would be necessary in order to appreciate it; but we give on the next page "a rough notion" of the variations of tone in a short passage by taking the well-known sentence: "*As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him,*" marking a "note" for each separate syllable, and arranging them at the approximately relative heights which they appear to occupy in the "scale" of speech sounds. Then a line is run through them to connect the series, and the result fairly represents by the variations of curvature the rise and fall of the voice as it travels from the beginning to the end of the sentence.

Example I shows *absolute monotone,* or complete absence of any change of *inflection* or of *pitch.*

Example II shows *relative monotone,* or change of *inflection* only, without any change of *pitch.*

Example III shows *combined effect* of changes of *inflection* and of *pitch.*

EXAMPLE I

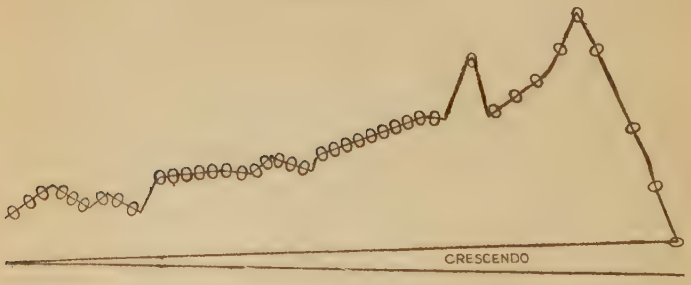


As Cæsar loved . . . . . I slew him.

EXAMPLE II

As Cæsar loved . . . . . I slew him.

EXAMPLE III



As Cæsar loved . . . . . I slew him.

CHAPTER XXX

GESTURE

THE value of *gesture* as an aid to speech in the expression of our sentiments is variously estimated by various authorities. Some very good speakers almost entirely dispense with it. Others are altogether too lavish in the use of it. According to Cicero it is "the language of the body," and he calls it his "weapon" in delivery. And yet we are more frequently offended by its excess than by its defect in public speakers generally. Great speakers tell us that they experienced much more difficulty in the beginning of their career to restrain useless and unnecessary gestures than to follow the well-known advice of Shakespeare: "Suit the action to the word." Perhaps it is owing to this ambiguous expression that so many beginners err by thinking that every word must have an accompanying gesture. But even if every idea, not to say every word, were to be expressed in suitable gesture, we could not possibly follow the speaker through the mazes of his multitudinous motions. Besides, gesture is merely a form of emphasis, and as "none emphatic can that actor call who lays an equal emphasis on all," so he who makes a gesture for everything destroys thereby the very aim and meaning of all gesture. We have the power of articulate speech, and it is certainly unreasonable to give it as little credit as some do for the capacity of expressing our ideas without the aid of dumb signs and symbols.

This excess of action is by no means confined to

beginners. According to Lewes, "all but very great actors are redundant in gesticulation; not simply overdoing the significant, but unable to repress insignificant movements." "If actors," he says, "will study fine models, they will learn that gestures to be effective must be significant, and to be significant they must be rare."

On the other hand, it is clear that some use of gesture, besides being useful in adding to the effect of speech by emphasising the important portions of it, is an instinct of nature. "The natural language of gesture is God's language. We did not invent it," says Cook. Nor must we "exclude from the representation the graces of action, without which the choicest sentiments, clothed in the most exquisite expression, would appear unanimated and insipid." But here arises the difficulty. There are numerous "systems" of gesture, most of them good, perhaps, because they afford some exercise and direction in graceful motions, but as a rule they aim at a too fixed, formal, and set code of "rules" which the student is inclined to follow at the expense of being natural. Just as one man's clothes will not fit another, just as the very nature and temperament of one is directly opposite to that of another, so the "set of gestures" which might suit some would be altogether out of place in others. There is too much individuality about proper gesture to expect the one size, style, and cut to suit all comers. To acquire motions suitable to our individual natural requirements, we should have the aid of an intelligent and careful teacher, who would notice and develop our own spontaneous efforts, and by his advice and skill round off all angularities and eliminate all awkward-

ness of movement, rather than artificially graft upon us his own particular style and peculiarities.

The first quality of proper gesture is grace and dignity. To acquire both ease and grace of movement there is nothing better than a course of calisthenics. The use of the "Indian clubs" especially has a wonderful effect in producing graceful motions of the arms and hands. The benefit of such exercises to the general health is apparent; and as the tone and quality of the voice depend so largely on the state of our physical constitution, there is more than one reason for recommending such a course.

Our inward feeling, our knowledge of and sympathy with our subject is the best motive force in expressive gesture which has been properly pruned. We may make motions with our hands of more or less grace and beauty, but unless they correspond with our own *ideas,* they will appear merely mechanical, automatic, and devoid of all true significance. "There is a hand that has no heart in it," says Bartol, "there is a claw, or paw, a flipper, or fin," which conveys neither friendship nor affection in its heartless grasp. A true and effective gesture must have life and soul in it.

The use of a looking-glass is recommended by some authorities as a help in the study of gesture and facial expression. Its value in correcting faults in the latter is certainly great. The famous Macready had two or three large mirrors in his room, in which he studied the various expressions of his own countenance as well as his gestures.

But Goldsmith would never admit the value of this device. His argument was that "people seldom improved when they had no other model but them-

selves to copy from." Still it is well to have at our disposal such a constant monitor which will at least show us our faults and allow us to see ourselves as others see us, unless our vanity makes us blind to our defects and causes us to exaggerate our good impressions.

Gesture in general includes not only the motions of the hands and arms but the rest of the body as well—head, trunk, legs, and feet; although of course the hands are naturally the most prominent in action. The movements include not only the hands themselves but also the wrists and fingers. Of the hands Quintilian says: "Without the aid of the hands, action or gesture would be mutilated, and void of energy; but it is hardly possible, as they are almost as copious as words themselves, to enumerate the variety of performances of which they are capable. By them do we not demand, promise, call, dismiss, threaten, supplicate, express abhorrence and terror, question and deny? Do we not by them express joy and sorrow, doubt, confession, repentance, measure, quality, number, and time? Do they not also encourage, implore, restrain, convict, admire, respect? And in pointing out places and persons, do they not discharge the office of adverbs and pronouns, so that in the great variety of language that exists between kingdoms and nations, the language of the hand appears to be the universal language of all mankind." And Cressolius (a French Jesuit of the 17th century) says: "The hand is the admirable contrivance of the Divine Artist, the minister of reason and wisdom, without which there can be no eloquence. Nay, man full of wisdom and divinity would have appeared nothing better than a mere trunk, or block, had he not been

adorned with this interpreter and messenger of his thoughts." Notwithstanding these eloquent encomiums, however, these writers seem to manage to express themselves fairly well without the use of gesture at all. Is it that English is the only language which can convey ideas adequately without the multitudinous motions in which other nations seem to indulge?

It is naturally impossible that one could give expression to any strong feeling or emotion by the action of the hands alone as an aid to the voice. If one really feels the truth of what he endeavours to express, the effect must be visible in his whole frame and features. "When a man," says Bell, "clenches his fist in passion, the other arm does not lie in elegant relaxation; when the face is stern and vindictive there is energy in the whole frame. When a man rises from his seat in impassioned gesture, there pervade in every limb and feature a certain tension and straining."

When one is moved by any extraordinary event or statement, he expresses his sentiments first in his features, then in his gestures, and last of all in his words. This shows the importance of *facial expression*. But this is about all that can be said on the subject, because, though we may teach a pupil to "make faces" according to rule and measure, we shall never teach him facial expression in the true sense unless we can train his mind and soul to see and appreciate, to believe and feel the sentiments we desire to see mirrored in his countenance—

> The strong-felt passion bolts into his face,
> The mind untouched, what is it but grimace?
>
> LLOYD.

"By the countenance," says Quintilian, "every feeling is expressed; upon it the hearers depend, and into it they examine before the speaker opens his mouth; it is the object of approbation or dislike; it gives a deeper knowledge of the speaker's sentiments than his words, and often says more than language can express." So Holy Scripture says: "As the faces of them that look therein shine in the water, so the hearts of men are laid open to the wise" (Prov. xxvii, 19); and "A man is known by his look" (Eccl. xix, 26).

There is no part of the features that will more clearly show forth the inward thoughts, ideas, and sentiments than the eyes. They are truly called "the windows of the soul." According to Saunders: "Whatever of goodness emanates from the soul, gathers its soft halo into the eyes; and if the heart be a lurking-place of crime, the eyes are sure to betray the secret. A beautiful eye makes silence eloquent, a kind eye makes contradiction assent, an enraged eye makes beauty a deformity; so you see, forsooth, the little organ plays no inconsiderable, if not a dominant part."

Hence we ought to be very careful in the use of those important members. We should neither set them in a blank immovable stare, nor move them restlessly about, as if seeking some familiar face among the audience. Some are constantly raising the eyebrows; others make the "ready frown" a constant expression of mere seriousness.

It is difficult to say how a preacher who wears spectacles ought to act. Sometimes a weird and distracting effect is produced on the audience by the intermittent reflections from adjacent lights, which

spoils all facial expression, and frequently has an irritating effect on those who like to keep their eyes on the preacher. Indeed many great preachers have habitually shut their eyes when in the pulpit. It would be well to dispense with glasses, however, if possible.

CONCLUSION

ALL this analysis of the nature, composition, and delivery of sermons may seem very intricate and useless, or at least unnecessary. But the subject is not half so full of technicalities as, say, that of music. It takes far less time and trouble to grasp, very little practice in comparison, and is of infinitely more importance for a minister of the gospel than any other subject under the sun. We may be quite sure that if "Mr. Boscovel" had only spent on the study of preaching a fraction of the time which he must have spent in learning to "play movingly upon the violoncello" (*supra*, p. 80), he would have deserved a far better character as a clergyman than his supposed critic was pleased to give him.

When we observe the wonderful care, diligence, and perseverance which even heathens exercised in order to excel in profane oratory from motives of mere vanity and ambition, we must surely be amazed at our own negligence and remissness in being satisfied with mere mediocrity in the pulpit. "In his first address to the people," says Plutarch of Demosthenes, "he was laughed at, and interrupted by their clamours, for . . . he had a weakness and stammering in his voice, and a want of breath, which caused such a distraction in his discourse that it was difficult for the audience to understand him . . . Another time, we are told, when his speeches had been ill-received, and he was going home with his head covered, and in the greatest distress, Satyrus the player took him home and made him repeat a passage

from some author. When Demosthenes had done, Satyrus pronounced the same speech; and he did it with such propriety of action, and so much in character, that it appeared to the orator quite a different passage. He now understood so well how much grace and dignity action adds to the best oration, that he thought it a small matter to premeditate and compose, though with the utmost care, if the pronunciation and propriety of gesture were not attended to. Upon this he built himself a subterranean study to which he repaired every day, to form his action, and exercise his voice; and he would often stay there for two or three months together; shaving one side of his head, that, if he should happen to be ever so desirous of going abroad, the shame of appearing in that condition might keep him in. . . . The hesitating and stammering of his tongue he corrected by practising with pebbles in his mouth; and he strengthened his voice by running or walking uphill, and pronouncing some passages in an oration or a poem, during the difficulty of breath which that caused. He had, moreover, a looking-glass in his house, before which he used to declaim and adjust all his motions."

As the preaching of the gospel is the most sublime and important duty which God has entrusted to men, so the motives of the preacher should be of the purest and most spiritual nature. St. John Chrysostom, says Butler, "prescribes the manner in which a preacher ought to announce the word of God; with what indefatigable pains, and with what purity of intention, desiring only to please God and plant his love in all hearts, and despising the applause of men, insensible both to their praise and censures. His

discourse must be set off by piety, natural eloquence, plain simplicity, and dignity, that all may hear the divine word willingly, and with respect and pleasure, so as to wish at the end of the sermon that it were longer. The extreme danger of vainglory so much alarmed him, that in the close of this book he again speaks against that vice, and says, that he who entirely subdues this furious wild beast, and cuts off its numberless heads, enjoys a great interior calm, with infinite spiritual advantages; and that everyone is bound to stand always armed against its assaults."

As we have already seen, the spirit of faith and the practice of virtue are the greatest factors in the true success of the preacher. Of the holy preacher it may truly be said: "His will is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season" (Ps. i, 2, 3). His heart and mind will be so "wholly in these things" that "his profiting will be manifest to all, so that he shall save both himself and them that hear him" (*cf.* 1 Tim. v, 15, 16). This was the secret of the success of the great Massillon. Of him it is said: "As he entered the pulpit he appeared as a man who had profoundly meditated upon his subject. His very appearance, with an air of such deep thought and thorough penetration, already betokened the sublimity and importance of the truths he was going to speak about. Even before he opened his mouth the auditory were gained over. Then he spoke on, but not as a speaker who came forward to declaim with art a discourse he had committed to memory. All flowed from its source. He spoke from the abundance of

his heart, unable to restrain the truths and sentiments with which it was filled, and compelled to open for them an issue to display them exteriorly. Thus his whole being was animated. Everything spoke; everything persuaded; everything excited; everything affected; everything carried conviction and sentiment into the souls of his hearers; and all this came from the deep sincerity and ardent earnestness which gave force and vivacity to his language, because he spoke as he felt. He accordingly placed all the merit of delivery in showing himself thoroughly penetrated with the truths of which he desired to convince his auditory" (Preface to *Sermons*).

Hence the preachers of the gospels must also be witnesses—"You shall be witnesses unto me" (Acts i, 8), the Greek word for "witnesses" here being μάρτυρες, that is, those who uphold the truth in their own lives at any sacrifice. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. vi, 33). If we devote our attention in the first place to the personal knowledge of God and the personal practice of virtue, we shall be infallibly led to the knowledge and practice of all that befits our sacred calling and election and to the acquirement of every gift which that calling demands. Let us not, then, be outdone in our efforts by heathen professors, nor be less wise in our generation than the children of this world, who were laborious because they were virtuous according to their lights, and despise no means which they recommended or employed for the acquirement of that perfection in their art to which they aspired, and to which indeed they so fully attained—"and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an

incorruptible one" (1 Cor. ix, 25); for if "there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance" (Luke xv, 10), and if "they that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that instruct many unto justice, as stars for all eternity" (Dan. xii, 3), how great must be the heavenly harvest of happiness, and how bright must be the glory that awaits the holy priest and zealous preacher when he returns to the feet of his dear Lord and Master to render an account of his stewardship!

APPENDIX A

CHIEF DISCOURSES OF CHRIST

Charity: Matt. xxii, 35-40; Mark xii, 28-34; Luke x, 25-37.

Detachment: Matt. x, 32-42; Mark x, 28-31; Luke ix, 59-62, xiv, 26-35.

Divine Mission: Matt. xii, 1-50, xxi, 12-27; John v, 1-47, vii, 1-53.

Going to Emmaus: Luke xxiv, 13-32.

Going to Gethsemane: John xv, xvi.

Good Shepherd: John x, 1-42.

Humility: Matt. xviii, 1-5, xx, 20-28; Mark ix, 33-36, x, 35-45; Luke ix, 46-48; Matt. xxiii, 1-12; Mark xii, 39-44; Luke xiv, 7-11.

Instructions to Apostles: Matt. x, 1-42; Mark vi, 7-13; Luke ix, 1-5.

Instructions to Disciples: Luke x, 1-24.

Interior Purity: Matt. xv, 1-20; Mark vii, 1-23.

Jerusalem: Matt. xxiv, 1-51; Mark xiii, 1-37; Luke xxi, 5-38.

John Baptist: Matt. xi, 1-19; Luke vii, 18-35.

Last Judgement: Matt. xxiv, 29-51, xxv, 31-46; Mark xiii, 24-37; Luke xxi, 25-36.

Last Supper: John xiv, 1-31.

Love of Enemies: Matt. v, 38-48; Luke vi, 27-38.

Matrimony: Matt. xix, 1-12; Mark x, 1-12.

Nicodemus: John iii, 1-21.

Prayer: Matt. vi, 5-13; Luke xi, 1-13.

Prayer for Disciples: John xvii, 1-26.

Promise of Blessed Eucharist: John vii, 27-72.

Repentance: Matt. xi, 21-30; Luke x, 11-16.

Riches: Matt. xix, 16-26; Mark x, 17-27.

Samaritan Woman : John iv, 1-42.
Scandal : Matt. xviii, 6-14; Mark ix, 41-49; Luke xvii, 1-2.
Scribes and Pharisees : Matt. xxiii, 1-39; Luke xi, 14-54.
Self-denial : Matt. xvi, 24-28; Mark viii, 34-39; Luke ix, 22-27.
Sermon on Mount : Matt. v, vi, vii.
Solicitude : Matt. vi, 25-34; Luke xii, 14-34.
Sufferings of Followers : Matt. xxiv, 4-14; Luke xxi, 12-20; John xv, 18-27, xvi, 2-6.
Watchfulness : Matt. xxiv, 42-51; Mark xiii, 33-37.

APPENDIX B

CHIEF MIRACLES OF CHRIST

Barren Fig-Tree : Matt. xxi, 18-21 ; Mark xi, 13, 14, 20.
Bartimeus : Mark x, 46-52 ; Luke xviii, 35-43.
Blind Man : Mark viii, 22-26.
Boy Possessed : Matt. xvii. 14-20; Mark ix, 16-28; Luke ix, 38-45.
Calms Storm :Matt. viii, 24-27 ; Mark iv, 37-40; Luke viii, 23-25.
Centurion's Servant : Matt. viii, 5-13 ; Luke vii, 2-10.
Daughter of Jairus : Matt. ix, 18, 19, 23-26; Mark v, 22-24, 35-43 ; Luke viii, 41, 42, 49-56.
Deaf and Dumb Man : Mark vii, 32-37.
Demoniacs : Matt. viii, 28-34 ; Mark v, 2-20; Luke viii, 26-40.
Diseased Woman : Matt. ix, 20-22 ; Mark v, 25-34 ; Luke viii, 45-48.
Draught of Fishes : (1) Luke v, 1-11. (2) John xxi, 1-12.
Dropsical Man : Luke xiv, 1-4.
Dumb Man : Matt. ix, 32-34, xii, 22 ; Luke xi, 14.
Infirm Man : John v, 1-16.
Infirm Woman : Luke xiii, 11-14.
Lazarus : John xi, 1-45.
Leper : Matt. viii, 2-4 ; Mark i, 40-45 ; Luke v, 12-15.
Man Possessed : Mark i, 23-28 ; Luke iv, 33-37.
Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes : (1) Matt. xiv, 13-21 ; Mark vi, 31-44 ; Luke ix, 10-17 ; John vi, 1-14. (2) Matt. xv, 32-39 ; Mark viii, 1-9.
Palsied Man : Matt. ix, 2-8 ; Mark ii, 3-12 ; Luke v, 18-26.
Ruler's Son : John iv, 46-54.
Ten Lepers : Luke xvii, 12-19.

Two Blind Men : (1) Matt. ix, 27-31. (2) Matt. xx, 30-34.
Walks on Sea : Matt. xiv, 25-33; Mark vi, 47-52.
Water Made Wine : John ii, 1-11.
Widow's Son : Luke vii, 12-17.
Woman's Daughter : Matt. xv, 22-28; Mark vii, 25-30.

APPENDIX C

CHIEF PARABLES OF CHRIST

Barren Fig-Tree : Luke xiii, 6-9.
Cockle : Matt. xiii, 24-30.
Debtors : Luke vii, 41-48.
Fig-Tree : Matt. xxiv, 32-35.
Glutton : Luke xvi, 41-48.
Good Samaritan : Luke x, 30-37.
Labourers : Matt. xx, 1-16.
Leaven : Matt. xiii, 33 ; Luke xiii, 20, 21.
Lost Coin : Luke xv, 8-10.
Lost Sheep : Matt. xviii, 12-14 ; Luke xv, 4-7 .
Marriage Feast : Matt. xxii, 2-14. (*Cf.* Luke xiv, 16-24.)
Mustard Seed : Matt. xiii, 31, 32 ; Mark iv, 31, 32 ; Luke xiii, 19.
Net : Matt. xiii, 47-50.
Pearl : Matt. xiii, 45, 46.
Pharisee and Publican : Luke xviii, 9-14.
Pounds : Luke xix, 12-27. (*Cf.* Matt. xxv, 14-30.)
Prodigal Son : Luke xv, 11-32.
Rich Man : Luke xii, 16-21.
Seed : Mark iv, 26-29.
Servants : Matt. xxiv, 42-51 ; Mark xiii, 33-37 ; Luke xii, 36-48.
Sower : Matt. xiii, 3-23 ; Mark iv, 3-20 ; Luke viii, 5-15.
Supper : Luke xiv, 16-24. (*Cf.* Matt. xxii, 2-14.)
Talents : Matt. xxv, 14-30. (*Cf.* Luke xix, 12-27.)
Ten Virgins : Matt. xxv, 1-13.
Treasure : Matt. xiii, 44.
Two Sons : Matt. xxi, 28-32.

Unjust Judge : Luke xviii, 1-8.
Unjust Steward : Luke xvi, 1-17.
Vineyard : Matt. xxi, 33-43; Mark xii, 1-10; Luke xx, 9-16.
Wedding Garment : Matt. xxii, 11-14.

INDEX

A

Absolute monotone, 179, 181
Accentuation, 151, 153
Accommodation to the child-mind, 105, 107
Action, excess of, 183
Act of hope, example of involved style, 63
Actors and preachers compared, 158
" Adam's apple," 143
Adherence to custom and prejudice, 34
Admiration, extravagant, 36
Advantages of a concordance, 93
of learning, 130
of simple explanation, 81, 85, 89
of sacred orators, 169
of virtue, 131
Advice of St Paul, 3
Aeroplane, view from, 95
Affected style, 54
disdain of eloquence, 12
A Homily, Chap. XIII, 80-84
Alleged Difficulties of Preaching, Chap. I, 3-8
Alphonsus, St, and devotion to Mary, 101, 104
" Instructions to Preachers," 99
Analysis of voice changes, 160
Anecdote of sailors, 57
of Milesian girl, 57
Angelus, 102
Annunciation, 102
Apollo, 11
Apologetics, Christian, 32, 119
A Popular Instruction, Chap. XII, 75-79
Apostles, example of, 93
preaching of, 25
Apostolic spirit, 132
Appearance, St Paul's personal, 23
Appreciation, spiritual, 28
Aristotle on art of delivery, 140
Art, necessity for, 140
of elocution, 140, 141
of preaching, 133
of public speaking, 35
Articulation, 151, 152
Artificial position of public speaker, 141
Art of Delivery, The, Chap. XXI, 139-142
Asperges, 75
Athletes, exercises of, 158
" Attack," 154
Attention, duration of, 113, 114
live, 84
Augustine, St, desire of, 27
preaching of, 18, 21
Authentic version of Bible, 94
Average length of sermons, 113, 114

B

Bacon, on studies, 48, 49
on writing, 48
Balmes on prejudiced opinions, 35
Bar, eloquence of, 30
Basil, St, and eloquence, 20, 21

Bellows, 143
Berardi, 8, 65
Besant on two types of clergymen, 71-73
Bible, authentic version of, 94
stories, 96, 97
" Bird's-eye view " of subject, 95, 96
Bishops, chief duty of, 16
Books, the sacred, 93
Books, Holmes on, 119
" Boscovel, Mr.", 71, 190
Breaking up sentences, 109, 110
Breathing, control of, 143, 144
exercises, 145
methods of, 144
Breath, waste of, 144
Bright, John, *expression* of, 169
Butler, on causes of failure, 132
on learning, 131
on preaching to one's self, 133
on watchfulness, 127

C

Calendar, Church, 85, 86
Canon of style, most important, 61
Care, 128
Catechetical Instructions, Chap. XVII, 105-112
Catechising, advantages of, 107, 108
language of, 108
of children, 106
of the people, 106
Catechism of Council of Trent, 113
Catechisms, 114
Catechist, model of, 112
Catering, spiritual, 44, 45
Causes of dislike of preaching, 3, 16
of indistinctness, 152, 153, 164, 166
of unfruitfulness, 132
Changes, voice, 157, 158
analysis of, 159
Chesterfield on elocution, 140
" Choppy " delivery, 144
Child-mind, the, 111
Children, instruction of, 106, 112
Christ, example of, 93
spirit of, 170
Christian Apologetics, 32
Christian eloquence, 28, 30
Cicero on style of Isocrates, 29
Circumstances, modern, 32
novelty of, 58
Classical training, some results of, 62
Clavicular breathing, 144
Clearness, of style, 61
Quintilian on, 61
" Clergyman's sore throat," 147
Clergymen, two types of, 71-73
Colour, voice, 149
Composition, a school subject, 52
Conclusion, 190-194
Concordance to Scriptures, advantages of, 93
Congregations, 25, 26
Consonants, importance of, 152-154
Consecutive Courses of Preaching, Chap. XVIII, 113-120
" Copious loquacity," 62
Contrast between St Paul and Isocrates, 30
Control, breath, 144
Cords, vocal, 143
Corinth, 9
Corinthians, Epistle to, 9, 10
Corruption of eloquence, 28, 29
Courses of sermons, Chap. XVIII, 116-120
Creation of difficulties, 3, 16, 34
Critics, literary, 59, 60
Cardinal Newman on, 59
Curé of Ars, 50

D

Damasus, Pope, 86, 88
Danger of vainglory, 192
Deep breathing, 144, 145
Defence of Catholic principles, 119
Delivery, natural gift of good, 140
foundation of success in preaching, 139
rate of, Chap. XXVI, 160-165
Demosthenes, 190, 191
Destructive elements, 38
Desultory preaching, 17
Detailed aspect, 110
treatment, 105
Devotion to Mary, 103
to the Holy Ghost, 116-118
Diaphragm, 143, 144
Diaphragmatic breathing, 144
Difficulties, creation of, 3, 16, 34
of preaching, alleged, Chap. I, 3-8
Difficulty of catechising, 105
Dignity in gesture, 185
in language, 64
Diligence of profane orators, 190
Dionysius of Halicarnassus, 29, 30
Discourses of Christ, 195
Discussion on St Paul's style, 22
Disdain of eloquence, affected, 20
Dislike of preaching, 20
Distinctness, safeguard of, 23
Disturbance of proportions, 164
Docere, 63
Doctrine, attention to, 119
prejudice in favour of a, 31
Duties of preachers, St Peter on, 128, 132
Duty of pastors, twofold, 16
of preaching, St Thomas on, 17
" Dumb dogs," 7, 72

E

Education, a process, 49
classical, effects of, 35, 62
of priests, 47, 48, 62
true, 47, 48
Effects of virtue, 130-133
of some sermons, 44
Efficacy, Sources of, Chap. XX, 126-135
Elements, destructive, 38
of delivery, 160
Elocution, as an art, 140, 141
as a science, 156-159
importance of, 139
necessary for priests, 169
Eloquence, Christian, 30, 31, 32
corruption of, 28
decline of, 28
disdain of, 21
forensic, 32
of Holy Scripture, 97
of Isocrates and St Paul, compared, 29
origin of, 28, 29
popular, 28, 29
profane, 11
public, 29
pulpit, 11
renunciation of, by SS Basil and Gregory, 20
Sacred and Profane, Chap. V, 28-33
Emphasis, 167, 168
simple and compound, 167
Encyclicals, Pope Leo's, 91, 116
Enthusiasm, 69
Epistle, 81
Epistles and Gospels, The, Chap. XIV, 85-89
Epistles, Pauline, style of, 22, 23

Epistle to the Corinthians, 9, 10
Essential quality of catechist, 111
Estius on preaching, 17
Example of Christ and apostles, 93
Example of questions for children, 110, 111
Excess of action, 183
of *force*, 166, 167
Excuses for not preaching, 16
Exercises, breathing, 145
of athletes, 158
voice, 148
Experiences of young priest, 75-90
Experimental knowledge of virtue, 133
Explanation, popularity of, 90
simple, 90, 97
Expression, 168, 169
Expression by voice changes, 156, 157
clearness of, 61, 62
facial, 187
Quintilian on, 61
Expressive gesture, 185
Eyes, management of, 188, 189

F

Fable of jackdaw, 41
Facial expression, 187
Factor, greatest common, of Epistle and Gospel, 87
Factors of delivery, 160
Failure of preachers, 132, 133
Faith, 128, 129
lively, 129
results of, 130
speculative, 129
Faithful, seasoning of, 128
False ideas of Corinthians, 10, 11
False Models of Eloquence, Chap. VII, 39-43
False Models of Preaching, Chap. VIII, 44-51
False Standards of Eloquence, Chap. VI, 34-38
False teachers, 126
Faults of pronunciation, 151, 153
Feeling, 168, 169
Fides informata, 129
Fine sermons, 44
Flattery, 60
Force, 166
Force, Emphasis, and Expression, Chap. XXVII, 166-171
Fouard, Abbé, on Pauline Epistles, 23
Francis de Sales, St, on chief object of preacher, 63, 64
on hearers and preachers, 6, 7
on knowledge necessary, 58
on preparation for preaching, 4
French models of eloquence, 45

G

Gamaliel, 22
Garrick, 159
Gehenna, 82
Gentiles, conversion of, 31
Gesture, Chap. XXX, 183-189
Gift of good delivery, 140
"Glories of Mary," 104
Gospel truths, nature of, 9
Grace and dignity in gesture, 185
Grace, instrument of, 133
Graphic illustration of modulation, 181
Gregory, St, and eloquence, 20

H

Hard palate, 148
Health and voice, 146
Heart, simplicity of, 111
Heathen orators, diligence of, 190

" Hell fire," 81
Holmes on books, 119
Holy Ghost, devotion to, 116-118
office of, 117
Pope Leo on, 116
preaching on, 116-118
special grace of, 134
Holy preacher, 194
priest, sermon of, 133
Holy Scripture in General, Chap. XV, 90-98
Holy Water, 75-77
Homily, A, Chap. XIII, 80-84
Horne, Bishop, as a speaker, 152
Human eloquence, 11, 12, 19
learning, despised by St Paul, 20

I

Idea, principal, 161
of the child-mind, 111
Immediate preparation, 15, 95
Importance of elocution, 139
Inconvenient results of involved style, 63
Indistinctness, 152, 160, 164
Individuality, recasting of, 169
Inflection, Chap. XXVIII, 172-176
Inflection, classes of, 172
degrees of, 173
general principles of, 173
in interrogations, 174, 176
Influence of man of prayer, 133
Insight, spiritual, 112
Instinctive gesture, 184
Instruction of children, 108
Instruction, A Popular, Chap. XII, 75-79
" Instructions to Preachers " (St. Alphonsus), 99
Instrument of speech, 143
Intention, purity of, 191
Interest, of preacher in his business, 71
popular, in explanation of things, 103
Interrogations, inflections used in, 174-176
Involved sentences, 62, 108, 109
Irish preachers, 42
people, religious knowledge of, 41
Isaias on duty of preaching, 7
Isocrates, style of, 29
compared with St. Paul's, 30
" Itching ears," 13

J

Jackdaw, fable of, 41
Jargon, 40
Jerome, St, and the Epistles and Gospels, 86-88
John Chrysostom, St, on neglect of pastors, 127
on purity of intention, 191, 192
John d'Avila, St, on *art* of preaching, 133
John of Antioch, 22
Johnsonese, 37
Journalese, 40, 41
Judging sermons, false standard of, 11
Judicious pausing, 162, 163

K

" Key " of speech-sounds, 177, 178
Kind of preparation necessary, 6, 15
Knowledge, 127
experimental religious, 133
kind necessary for preacher, 56, 130
of scripture, 88, 92
religious, of Irish people, 42

L

Labour of love, preaching a, 43
Lack of zeal, 69
Language, affected, 36
and style, 60
of St Paul, 18
simplicity of, 109
Larynx, 143
Laziness, excuse for, 21
"Learned" congregations, 25, 26
Learning, obstacles to, 130, 131
value of, 130
Leo XIII, 91, 116, 117
"Let" exercise, 149
Literary Style, Chap. X, 59-65
Literature, poisonous, 93
Live attention, 84
Live study of Scripture, 94
Living voice, 133
Logical method of speaking, 6
training of priests, 47
Long sentences, 62, 108
words, 108
Looseness of style, 64
Loquacity, copious, 62
Louis XIV and Massillon, 13
Love, preaching a labour of, 43
language of, 104
the secret of zeal, 128

M

Macaulay on Johnson's style, 36, 37
Macready, 185
Main idea in modulation, 161, 177
Mary, devotion to, 101
Massillon, and Louis XIV, 13
secret of success of, 192, 193
Materials for sermons, classes of, 115, 116
extent of, 100, 101
manner of dealing with, 101
Matter of sermons, 99
Mechanism, voice, 143, 146
Meditation on divine truths, 192
Messmer, Bishop, 119
Method, natural, 6
of catechising children, 106, 107
Methods of breathing, 143-146
of St Paul's preaching, 31 32
Milesian girl, anecdote of, 57
Miracles of Christ, chief, 197, 198
Mission, first, of St. Paul, 31
sermons, 44
Model, St Paul's, 24
Modern preachers, circumstances of, 32
Modulation, principles of, Chap. XXV, 155-159
Monotone, 179, 181, 182
Montaigne, 57, 60
Motive power of preacher, 69
Motives of preacher, 134, 191
Mouth-breathing, 146
Movere, 63
Muscles, throat, effect of, 147

N

Natural canon of style, 61
language of gesture, 186
method of composition, 6
principles of elocution, 157
treatment of a sermon, 46
Nature and Object of Preaching, The, Chap. II, 9-14
Necessity of prayer for preachers, 118
Neglect of preaching, 7, 15, 127
of study, 70
New form of eloquence, rise of, 30, 31
Newman, Cardinal, on critics, 59
on style, 60, 61

Nicephorus, 22
Novelty of circumstances, 58
Number of questions necessary, example of, 110

O

Object, chief, of preachers, 63
first, of preachers, 134
of reading up a subject, 95, 115
Objects of eloquence, 63
Obligation, chief, of pastors, 16
of catechising the people, 105, 106
Obligation of Valid Preaching, The, Chap. III, 15-21
Obstacles to learning, 130, 131
Obvious sense of parables, 97
Occasional Sermons, Chap. XIX, 121-125
Official Word, special power of, 134
Officium principalissimum pastoris, 17
Old Testament stories, 97
Opening of a new church, treatment of occasional sermon, for, 122-124
Orations, "regular," 19, 20
Ordeal, preaching as an, 3, 6
Origin of public eloquence, 28, 29
of rhetoricians and sophists, 29
Ornaments of style, 61
Orotund voice, 179

P

Palates, hard and soft, 148
Parable of the unjust judge, 96
Parables, obvious sense of, 97
of Christ, chief, 199
Pastors, duty of, 16-19
Patience and perseverance in preaching, 119
Paul, advice of, to Timothy, 3
contempt of, for human science, 24
education of, 22, 23
literary style of, 22-25
model followed by, 24-25
native language of, 22
preaching of, Chap. IV, 22-27
Pause, 162-165
importance of, 165
Perfect voice, secret of a, 146
Perseverance, in preaching, 119
of profane orators, 190
Personal appearance of St Paul, 22
charm of preacher, 21
Peter, St, on duties of preachers, 128
Pharisees, 81
Pitch, Chap. XXIX, 177-182
Pitch, 177
degrees of, 177
graphic illustration of, 182
series of, 178
Placere, 63, 64
Poisonous literature, 93
Pope Leo XIII, Encyclical of, on Scripture, 93
on the Holy Ghost, 116
Popular eloquence, corruption of, 29
origin of, 28, 29
results of, 29
rise of, 28
Popular Instruction, A, Chap. XII, 75-79
Popular preachers, 1, 5
Popularity of simple explanation, 75-103
Power, motive, of preachers, 69
Praise of sermons, best, 13, 14

Practice, of principles preached, 134
of virtue, 192, 193
Prayer, hints for sermons on, 95
influence of man of, 133
necessity of, for preachers, 118
to the Holy Ghost, 119
Preachers, advantages of, 170
cause of failure, 130
chief object of, 61
holy, 192
first object of, 134
" Instructions to," of St Alphonsus, 99
Irish, 42
knowledge necessary for, 56, 130
language affected by some, 36
modern circumstances of, 32
motive power of, 69
motives of, 134, 191
must preach to themselves first, 133
privileged office of, 135
purity of intention of, 191
reward of, 194
special help of, 170
spirit of, 133
Preaching, as an ordeal, 3, 53
cause of dislike of, 3, 16
constant, 15
desultory, 17
different forms of, 50
duty of, 4, 13, 15, 16
efficacy of, Chap. XX, 126-135
false standards of judging, 11
foundation of success in, 139
correct, 26
frequent, 4
importance of, 16
objects of, 63
Preaching, of Apostles, 25
of holy priests, 132, 133
of pastors, 4
of St Augustine, 18-21
of St Paul, Chap. IV, 22-27
preparation for, 3-6, 15, 16, 18
wrong method of, 94
punishment for neglect of, 7, 14, 127
time limit of, 113
use of watch in, 114
valid and invalid, 11, 12
Preaching of St. Paul, The, Chap. IV, 22-27
Prejudice, adherence to, 34
in favour of a doctrine, Balmes on, 35
Preparation of sermons, 4-6, 9, 15, 16
kinds of, 15, 16
time required for, 4, 5, 7
wrong method of, 94
Prerequisites, Chap. XI, 69-74
Press, weakness of, 36-38
Priest, as watchman, 7, 127
Priests, education of, 47, 48
punished for neglect, 7, 15, 127
Principles, Catholic, defence of, 119
Principles of Modulation, The, Chap. XXV, 155-159
Privileged office of preacher, 135
Production of voice sound, 146
Pronunciation, Chap. XXIV, 151-154
Proportions, proper, 141
disturbance of, 164
Providentissimus Deus, 91
Prudence in catechising, 108
Public eloquence, 29
Public speaking, an art, 35, 140, 141
Pulpit and Press compared, 39-41

Punishment of neglect, 7, 15, 127
Purity of intention, 191
of style, 62

Q

Quality, voice, 147
Questions, catechetical, examples of, 110, 111
Quiller-Couch, Sir Arthur, on jargon, 40
on "Journalese," 40, 41
Quintillian, on affected style, 54
on clearness of expression, 61
on copious loquacity, 62
on facial expression, 187
on gesture, 186, 188

R

Rate, 160
Rate of Delivery, Chap. XXVI, 160-165
Rationalistic literature, 41
Reading, backwards, 153
object of, 94, 95, 115
Real difficulties, creation of, 34
Real value of sermons, 10
of studies, 47
Recasting our individuality, 169
Reciters and preachers, 158, 159
Reed instruments, 143
Regular orations, 19, 20
Relative monotone, 181
Renunciation of eloquence by SS Basil and Gregory, 20, 21
Repute of some preachers, origin of, 98
Resonance, voice, 149
Results, barren, cause of, 132
of education, 70
Reward of preachers, 14, 193, 194
Rhetoric, 162
Rhetoricians, 29, 30
Rise of eloquence, 28, 29
Roman eloquence, 29

S

Sacramentals, 78, 79
Sacred and Profane Eloquence, Chap. V, 28-33
Sailors, anecdote of, 57
Salt of doctrine, 120, 128
Sanhedrim, 82
Science of elocution, 156-159
of modulation, Chap. XXV, 155-159
Scripture, assistance of, 88, 96, 97
authentic version of, 94
eloquence of, 97
explanation of, 90, 91
knowledge of, 88, 92
live study of, 94
Pope Leo XIII's Encyclical on, 91
study of, 92
systematic study of, 94
Seasoning, 127, 128
"with salt," 128
Secret of perfect voice, 147
of success, Massillon's, 192
of zeal, 128
Self-sanctification, 133
Sense, obvious, of parables, 97
Sentences, management of, 62, 108, 109
Sentinel, priest as, 127
Sermonese, 39
Sermons, best praise of, 14
elaborate, 45
French models of, 45
matter of, 97
mission, 46
Occasional, Chap. XIX, 121-125
of holy priest, 132

Sermons, preparation of, 4-6, 15, 16
standard of judging, 20, 21
treatment of, 46, 124
valid and invalid, 12, 13
value, real, of, 12
writing of, 45, 52
Sermons on our Blessed Lady, Chap. XVI, 99-104
Simple instruction, 90, 97
Simplicity of heart, 111
Slow delivery, 164
Soft palate, 148
Sophists, 28, 29
Sore throat, clergyman's, 147
Sound, voice, 142, 143, 146
Sounds, vowel, 149, 150
Sources of Efficacy, Chap. XX, 126-135
Speaking, looseness of style in, 64
public, an art, 140
and writing compared, 53, 64
Special preachers, 4
Spectacles, disadvantages of, in pulpit, 188, 189
Speculative faith, 129
Speech sounds, 180-182
Spirit of charity, 83
of Christ, 170
of Apostles, 132
Spiritual insight, 112
Spoken and written compositions, 64
Spoken Word, The, Chap. IX, 52-58
Staccato delivery, 144, 162
Standards of Eloquence, False, Chap. VI, 34-38
Study, a process, 49
of theology and Scripture, 118
real value of, 49
Style, affected, 54
clearness of, 61
critics of, 59, 60
definition of, 60
Style, diffuseness of, in pulpit, 64
Literary, Chap. X, 59-65
Natural canon of, 61
Newman on, 61
of Dr. Johnson, 36
of Pauline Epistles, 23, 24
of St. Paul, 22-25
opinions on, 59, 60
ornaments of, 30
purity of, 62
simplification of, 63
Subject-matter of sermons, 96
Sympathy with subject, 187
System of study, practical, 93

T

Tact in catechizing, 109
Teachers, false, 126
Telling the people things, 57
Test of audibility, 164, 165
Theological training, result of, 47, 62
Theology, study of, 118
Thomas, St, on duty of preaching, 17
Thorax, 143
Throat, muscles, effect of, 146
sore, 147
Time, 161, 162
Time, in the pulpit, 114
required for preparation, 4
Trachea, 143
Training of priests, 47, 49, 62
Translation of English, 37, 38
Types of clergymen, two (Besant), 71
Types of questions for children, 110

U

Unction, 132
Unfruitfulness, 132
Unjust judge, parable of, 96

V

Vainglory, 192
Valid and invalid preaching, 18, 19
Value of studies, 49
of sermons, 14
of Word of God, 10
" *Veni Creator Spiritus,*" 118
" *Veni Sancte Spiritus,*" 118
Vianney, M., 50
Vicious style, of Dr. Johnson, 36, 37
of press, 39-41
Virtue, experimental knowledge of, 133
importance of, to preacher, 128-130
personal practice of, 192, 193
results of, 132
Vocal cords, 143
Vocality, faults of, 151
pure, 151
Voice and Breathing, Chap. XXII, 143-147
Voice and health, 146
Voice-box, 143
Voice changes, analysis of, 160
Voice changes, graphic illustration of, 181, 182
colour, 149
exercises, 149
living, 134
resonance, 147
secret of perfect, 146
wrong use of, 150
Voice-sound, production of, 148
Vowel sounds, 149

W

Waste of breath, 144
Watch, use of, in pulpit, 114
Watchfulness, 127
Wind-chest, 143
Wind instruments, 143
Wind-pipe, 143
Wisdom, worldly, 21
Writing and speaking, 56, 64
Writing of sermons, 47, 53
Wrong method of preparation, example of, 95

Z

Zeal, 69, 133

251.1
F 679
FLYNN, THOS.
15971
AUTHOR
Preaching Made Easy
TITLE
DATE LOANED | BORROWER'S NAME | ROOM NUMBER
Sprague JAN 9
FEB 4 -
FEB 21
Borbeck
4/18/41
MAY 2 -
MAY 21
15971